

Friday October 4 1996

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The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

46.675

Friday Review

With European weather



Hoffman: a prisoner of his own anxieties

Cover story



A peculiar kind of genius

Adam Sweeting on the Percy Grainger revival

Music: pages 12/13

Blair sacks Greer supporter

Director of lobby firm dismissed from Labour's frontbench in Lords

David Hencke and Michael White

THE cash-for-questions scandal crossed party political lines last night when Tony Blair dismissed a front bench spokeswoman in the Lords, Lady Muriel Turner, after she publicly defended the lobbyist Ian Greer over his role in the affair.

Lady Turner is on the board of Ian Greer Associates.

The Labour leader's action came as John Major and Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Party chairman, launched a damage limitation exercise in an attempt to head off more embarrassment over the scandal involving Mr Greer and disgraced former minister Neil Hamilton — in advance of next week's Conservative conference in Bournemouth.

Mr Blair's decision came after Lady Turner told Channel 4 News: "While I believe Ian acted in an honourable way, I will stand by him." She

is an old friend of the lobbyist and joined the board of Ian Greer Associates in 1991.

Lady Turner, one of Mr Blair's employment spokesmen, said: "It is always a lottery to enter into litigation. But I still firmly believe in the innocence of Ian Greer. And I will continue to support him while I believe that."

When colleagues were alerted to her remarks, the leader of the Lords, Lord Richard QC, consulted Mr Blair's office and then told Lady Turner it would be inappropriate for her to stay on.

Mr Major said that he will give evidence to the inquiry set up by Sir Gordon Downey,

the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The Guardian will supply evidence to the inquiry to prove its case that Mr Hamilton had a covert financial relationship with Mr Greer which involved the ex-minister taking money for asking parliamentary questions.

Dr Mawhinney yesterday announced a clamp down on donations in the wake of the Guardian's disclosures earlier this week that 21 Tories had received election funding from Mohamed Al Fayed, the Harrods owner, and from the DHL private courier company boss, Dave Allen, through Mr Greer.

His warning, contained in a

letter to 651 local Tory party chairmen, said that the party did not accept donations if they had "strings" attached, if there was reason to believe they included illegally obtained money, if they were from foreign governments or from an unknown source.

Mr Major said: "I remain determined to maintain the reputation of Parliament. I have therefore written to Sir Gordon to say that the Government will co-operate fully with his investigation. He will be free to inspect all the papers which the Government provided to the court in connection with the libel action."

Last night Michael Cole, a

spokesman for Mr Al Fayed, said that all material which the Harrods owner is to submit to Sir Gordon's inquiry had been put in front of Mr Major two years ago. Mr Al Fayed then submitted the full details of his cash payments to Mr Hamilton to Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, chairman of the Commons Members' Interests Committee.

Mr Hamilton had asked for and received, Harrods gift vouchers worth thousands of pounds, Mr Cole told ITN: "He was given gift vouchers on more than one occasion. [They were for] £1,000, £2,000, around Christmas time and around his wife's birthday."

Alan Rusbridger, editor of the Guardian, yesterday challenged Mr Hamilton to release court papers to journalists after he denied yesterday's Guardian story that he had received gifts and payments in kind from Mr Greer worth thousands.

The payments in kind were offset against the £10,000 Mr Hamilton has already confessed to have taken from Mr Greer.

Mr Hamilton dismissed as a "fabrication" claims that he was given paintings worth almost £1,000 and airline tickets and that his wife Christine bought furniture on an account held by Mr Greer's company with the Chelsea de-

partment store, Peter Jones.

But Mr Rusbridger said: "We know — and Mr Hamilton knows — that Mr Greer's papers tell the true story of how Mrs Hamilton bought furniture on Mr Greer's account and how ICA Associates also paid for paintings worth £1,000 as well as plane tickets."

"So the choice for Mr Hamilton is simple: will he and Mr Greer allow journalists to examine these papers today? If not, then people will draw their own conclusions."

Profile, page 3; Leader comment, page 8; Peter Preston, Bel Littlejohn, page 9

New cloak of fear falls over Kabul as the Taliban cruise for Islamic code-breakers

Jonathan Steele in Kabul

THE young woman was carrying her baby, her two friends walking beside her. All three were veiled, their faces completely hidden from view. Suddenly a passing car braked to a halt and two men jumped out. From the style of their turbans, wrapped round their heads with one end loose and hanging almost down to the waist, it was clear they were the Taliban from Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

Each was brandishing a stick. They set about beating the women on the legs. As their arms rose and fell, they shouted that the women

should never come out in public dressed in such immoral fashion again. A few inches of bare leg were showing above the women's ankles between their shoes and the bottom of their pyjama-style trousers.

This was nudity enough to affront Islam as preached by Afghanistan's new rulers, who seem determined to turn the country into the most fundamentalist state in the world.

The woman with the baby staggered and swayed beneath the blows, desperately trying to stay upright. None of the three dared to utter a sound as the sticks whipped their legs. Then the men got back in the car and drove off. The incident lasted less than five minutes, but it was sufficiently brutal to leave the women quaking as they limped silently away.

This is kerb-crawling, Kabul-style. It is the sharp end of a reign of intimidation which has sunk on the capital since the Taliban captured it a week ago. Its name means "seekers" or "students", and in the short time they have been in power they have closed all the schools, for boys and girls, and given orders that women should not work.

The incident was recounted to me by Hashmat, (not his real name), a young male doctor, as we sat in his room in the Jumburiyet hospital. He saw the beating on Monday evening as he came into the



Two Afghan women, seen through a car's cracked windshield in Kabul, are dressed in strict Islamic style according to a new code laid down by the Taliban militia PHOTOGRAPH: SAIED KHAN

building. Other Kabulis report similar punishment beatings.

Jumburiyet hospital is a run-down and depressing place, short of drugs, medicine and water. During the civil war when large parts of Kabul came under rocket and artillery fire, the hospital survived almost unscathed, although its corridors were overcrowded with the wounded and dying.

Since the Taliban takeover, the deputy director and 12 male doctors have disappeared. Colleagues assume they fled to the north to escape the Taliban advance, along with government officials and an estimated 250,000 Kabulis.

No nurses or women doctors have come to work. The Taliban has promised the women will be paid for three months while new regulations are worked out, but no

one knows whether they will ever be allowed back. The hospital has small six-bed rooms, separate ones for men and women. They are on the same corridors. Will this have to be changed?

Two women were cleaning the floor outside Dr Hashmat's office. One wore a black veil round her head which she clearly had had little practice in adjusting. It flopped down as she talked. A widow with eight children, she said she felt obliged to break the new rules and come to work because she had to feed her family. She earns \$4 a month from the health ministry and an extra \$8 from the international relief agency, Médecins Sans Frontières, which has a programme to help the hospital. With the schools closed, all her children are at home. The eldest girl, aged 14, is looking after them.

The boys' schools have been shut while a new "Islamic" curriculum is prepared. The university was shut at the weekend, and the rector dismissed, for the same reason.

Another male doctor at Jumburiyet, Dr Kabir, said he had watched the Taliban starting up in the refugee camps in Pakistan during the mujahedin war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

"People sent their sons to the madrassahs [religious schools] so that they could at least learn something. We never thought they were teaching such extremism," he said ruefully.

Like many other followers of the mujahedin, Dr Kabir

was disillusioned by their performance after they took power in 1992. The two main factions could not combine. The army led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fundamentalist, sat on the edge of the city, pouring in artillery and rocket fire for three years until his conditions were met and he became prime minister in June.

The fighting, plus the corruption of President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government and the former mujahedin field commanders, who awarded themselves several villas and cars apiece, destroyed their support. People half-welcomed the Taliban when it ousted Mr Rabbani last week, hoping that at least peace would be restored. They have already changed their minds.

The two doctors revealed that the director was given a

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Labour

Catholics deny secret abuse cases fund

Madeline Bunting Religious Affairs Editor

THE Catholic Church flatly rejected media reports yesterday of a secret Channel Islands-based fund used to pay compensation to victims of sexual abuse by priests.

It said its insurance was standard employers liability cover.

According to BBC Scotland,

the Catholic National Mutual, an insurance company backed by Royal Sun Alliance, based in Guernsey, offered Catholic dioceses in the UK in the early 1990s special liability cover on payment of additional premiums against claims arising from abuse cases.

The Catholic Church has faced million dollar settlements for claims brought by victims of child sex abuse in the United States, Australia

and Canada in recent years, bringing some dioceses and religious orders to the verge of bankruptcy.

The Catholic Media Office in London said the Catholic National Mutual was based in Guernsey purely as a cost-saving measure. It insisted its cover made no specific reference to abuse and was similar to thousands of policies taken out by schools, hospital trusts and local authorities.

Inquiries in the early 1990s

had revealed the standard policy already provided cover for liability claims from victims of abuse, but would only make pay out if the diocese was negligent, said Monsignor Kieran Conry.

"It is a standard liability policy which covers the Church for when a tile falls off a roof or the spire falls down. There are no sinister extra bits for additional cover for abuse and no specific reference to abuse," confirmed

Tom Sault, for the Royal Sun Alliance.

A trustee of the Catholic National Mutual, Monsignor Nicholas Rothon, financial secretary for Southwark diocese, said: "The terms of the policy haven't changed at all."

BBC Scotland said a "well-placed Church source" told it of a specific policy relating to abuse and that additional premiums were collected by a Bristol-based broker.

British jazz musician wins top award

Alex Bellos

BITAIN'S resurgent jazz scene was given a boost yesterday when one of its musicians won the jazz equivalent of the Nobel Prize.

Django Bates, the pianist, bandleader and composer, was awarded the annual £20,000 International Jazzpar Prize in Copenhagen.

Inside
Britain
Diarmuid O'Neill, the IRA suspect shot dead by police in London, was buried in a hillside cemetery in Cork, Ireland.

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World News
Boris Yeltsin used hospital radio to demonstrate to the Russian nation he was still in charge by broadcasting a six-minute message.

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Finance
British Gas rejected the industry watchdog's plans to impose hefty price cuts, worth an annual £28 to the average home.

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Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson, at the Labour Party conference, moaned about having to play too many games too close together.

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The Rikki Neave case: Mother accused of murder

Boy's naked body spreadeagled 'like a black magic sacrifice'



Ruth Neave... 'sent six-year-old son out after midnight to buy drugs for her'

SIX-year-old boy strangled and spreadeagled naked in the manner of a Leonardo da Vinci drawing may have been a black magic sacrifice, a court heard yesterday. Rikki Neave's body was found in a wood near a Peterborough housing estate 18 hours after he had been reported missing on a Monday evening two days ago by his 28-year-old mother, Ruth. At Northampton crown court yesterday she pleaded not guilty to his murder. He had been strangled, apparently by someone taking hold of his anorak to haul him off the floor, and twisting the clothing in a way that turns the collar into a ligature. So powerful was the force used that an imprint of the zip was left in the skin just under the boy's Adam's apple. "The must have been held in that position for at least half a minute before he became limp and lifeless," said James Hunt, QC, as he opened the case for the prosecution at the crown court. He said the distinct position in which the body had been arranged was no less significant than the manner of his death and was one of the keys to the case. The boy's body was spreadeagled in a hollow in the woods, several hundred yards from his home on the estate. Each limb had been arranged symmetrically in the image of da Vinci's famous drawing, The Vitruvian Man. Even his thumbs were aligned. Ruth Neave, who had threatened to kill the child in the past and was a drug addict, had a strong interest in the occult. She even gave visiting neighbours readings from tarot cards, Mr Hunt told the jury. "Is it far fetched to suggest that from the position in which it was laid out it was almost as if the body had been offered up as a sacrifice? Is that over the top?" The short life of Rikki Neave was a miserable one, the jury heard. He and his stepfather, Dean Neave, hated each other. But his mother adored Mr Neave although he



Rikki Neave... 'mother said she would kill him if he was not taken into care'

'The book speaks of sacrifice, and that for the highest spiritual working one must choose a victim such as a male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence. That is the most satisfactory victim'

James Hunt, QC prosecuting

walked out the weekend before the boy's death on their third wedding anniversary. She had described Rikki as a "stumbling block to the relationship". Ruth Neave, who regularly injected amphetamines, used Rikki to go out and buy the drugs for her, and for her husband when he was there. "We suggest that when you look at that cover and when one looks at the picture [of the dead boy] there is a link. "Is it far fetched to suggest that from the position in which it was laid out it was almost as if the body had been offered up as a sacrifice? Is that over the top?" The short life of Rikki Neave was a miserable one, the jury heard. He and his stepfather, Dean Neave, hated each other. But his mother adored Mr Neave although he

him round the collar and lifting him off the ground. "Things were so bad that two days before he died, she asked Cambridgeshire social services to take Rikki into care, after she told a social worker that she would kill him if nothing was done. He was not taken into care. On the day he died, November 28, she claimed that he set off for school and that she did not see him again, said Mr Hunt. But Rikki did not get there. At 6pm she called the police to report him missing. But, according to officers who came to see her, said Mr Hunt, she appeared unconcerned and had not even gone out to look for the boy before calling them. After Rikki's body was found, Ruth Neave, who was described as having an un-

usual fascination with death and murder, went to the mortuary "four or five times" to stroke and fondle the boy's body. She showed a keen interest in the work of the pathologist who had carried out the post mortem examination. "It is plain there were no eye witnesses to the killing," said Mr Hunt. "It's a matter for you to decide whether this was a wicked woman, who as a calculated act decided to sacrifice her six-year-old son who was out of control to keep her husband and rid herself of a stumbling block. "She went further in her usual method of violence towards her delinquent son... Going to the brink as she had done in the past, but in going further than she had done before, she killed him." The case continues.

Channel ferry merger to sink 1,000 jobs

Influence of Shuttle brings deal between Stena and P&O

Keith Harper and Lisa Buckingham

AT LEAST 1,000 ferry workers will become the first victims of yesterday's decision by the cross-Channel ferry companies P&O and Stena to merge their operations between Dover and Calais. They bowed to the fierce competition of Le Shuttle - the 32-minute rail route through the tunnel - and formed a new company, P&O Stena Line. Two ferries will disappear at the end of the year, and other savings will follow. At present, the companies employ 5,600 on the route, a figure which will be initially reduced to 4,600, partly through the loss of jobs on the Stena line ship Invicta and the P&O ship Pride of Bruges. Some on-shore redundancies will eventually be announced after further details have been worked out. The consolidation of the ferry business follows the Government decision to lift its ban on links between Channel operators. The ban was imposed before the tunnel was built. But it has placed unfair competition on ferry companies who have been losing out to Le Shuttle.

Table titled 'Channel competition' showing fares for selected routes. Columns include route (Dover-Calais, Dover-Dieppe), company (P&O, Stena, Le Shuttle), and fare (£15, £15, £59, £50, £49, £69, £99, £98, £129).

Lord Sterling, P&O's chairman, said that the merger was for the "benefit of the populace at large". He declared: "It is a David and Goliath battle, if you like, but history has shown us that David can win. The enemy is the tunnel. We realised there was no point in fighting each other. "Someone had to make the move and make sure we could fight in the future." Lord Sterling said that the merger would satisfy demands of the regulators and politicians for "vigorous competition". "The ferry companies were being emasculated and we had the problem of whether we would have enough capital left, let alone money for new ships in 2005." He admitted that there would be job losses "and to suggest otherwise would be



Lord Sterling: 'It is a David and Goliath battle'

nonsense. But to do nothing meant that there would have been a bleak future. The difference between us and the Channel tunnel is that we are a people operation directed towards the public. The public therefore would have more choice." In figures to be published today, the Shuttle will claim a 48 per cent share of the passenger car market, against 34 per cent a year ago. Stena and P&O dispute the claim, and say their combined operation will bring them more than 40 per cent of cross-Channel trade. Under the deal, P&O Stena line will be 60 per cent owned by P&O, and will operate 24 ships on the Dover-Calais, Newhaven-Dieppe and Dover-Zeebrugge routes. The Swedish-owned company, Stena, will own 40 per cent of the

Cheap fares could go

GIVEAWAY £1 ferry crossings and winter "booze cruises" could become things of the past following yesterday's merger of cross-Channel operators, P&O and Stena, writes Lisa Buckingham. Although Lord Sterling, chairman of P&O, said he did not see fare prices rising because of competition from Eurotunnel, analysts predicted that the "Mickey Mouse tickets" traditionally offered to fill empty ferries would disappear. The merged ferry company, P&O Stena Line, is aiming to cut more than £10 million off combined operating costs which total £280 million a year. Some savings will come from eliminating their most blatantly loss making fares. Precise figures are unavailable but experts calculated that the "Mickey Mouse" probably account for about a tenth of the market. Mark McVicar, an analyst with stockbroker NatWest, said that although cheap deals would disappear, the route will still suffer severe overcapacity so pressures will remain on fares.

Cloak of fear falls on Kabul

continued from page 1

THE use of a mouth-long calat trip to stop a youth charged with assault from absconding was defended by council leaders yesterday. The youth, aged 13, said to be extremely disturbed, is due to spend another seven days at a cost of £1,100 a week to Gloucestershire social services department - on a narrowboat which is currently travelling Midlands waterways. The aim is to prevent him running away before he appears before magistrates next week in Stroud. He is one of three youths on the boat, run by the Liverpool firm Care Afloat, with four adults as supervisors. "It is not a holiday", a

Council defends canal boat trip for disturbed youngster

John Ezard

Gloucestershire social services spokeswoman said last night. "It is quite high security. People might assume the boy can just jump off on to a towpath and go to pubs but that is not so." The department said: "This youngster is in care because of family problems. He is too young to be placed in secure accommodation. This is the next best thing. "Some institutions can cost anything up to £8,000 a week. We view this as a very reasonable sum to be taken out of an annual budget of over £64 million. "The use of a boat is particularly appropriate when there is a danger of the young person absconding and when they have to be subject to firm control, but the authority does not have the powers to put them in a secure unit."

My interpreter found him self interpreting for the Taliban, although they assumed he was another doctor. "Have you got any patients here who were soldiers or officials in the Taliban regime?" they asked. One could guess why they wanted to know. "We don't ask where people come from," said Dr Hashmat. "We are doctors. It is not our business." The Taliban repeated the question a number of times before taking an interest in Dr Hashmat's naked chin. "Why haven't you got a beard? You had better grow one from now on," they threatened. The Taliban fighters have some vices. The one without the rifle fished in his flowing robes for a packet of cigarettes, then discovered he had no matches. "Anyone got a light?" he asked. The hospital is full of No Smoking signs, but not all the Taliban fighters, despite their religious education, can read. The doctors excused themselves for another lapse, and the disappointed Taliban put his cigarettes away. They asked the interpreter if he was a Pashtun, then gave him a hearty embrace. I seized the moment to ask if they had been to Kabul before. "No," they said. "Do you like it?" I asked. "Very nice, the older of the two replied. "But Islamic rule has not yet been implemented." With that ambiguous comment they left the room and set off cruising again.

Priceless acting in lewdly funny double bill

Review

Michael Billington

Blue Murder Newcastle Theatre Royal

WILL Peter Nichols get away with Blue Murder? I rather hope so since his new play is an odd, quirky double bill that both examines 1960s sexual morality and plays Pirandellian games with naturalistic theatrical conventions. It may be more successful at the latter than the former, but it is lewdly funny and boasts a pair of priceless perfor-

mances by Nichola McAuliffe. It is, in fact, two plays in one. The first, Foreign Bodies, is set in 1963 - the year, of course, that "sexual intercourse began", according to Larkin - and subverts all the conventions of drawing-room comedy. It takes a once-archetypal Shaftesbury Avenue bourgeois family (all G and Ts and tennis-playing) and shows it ready to embrace murder, perversion, sexual fantasy and eager to grasp a pneumatic porn-star to its collective bosom. Nichols upends all the conventions of the genre even to the extent of putting the play's writer into the cast and allowing the actors to comment on the action. Which leads to the second play, A Game of Soldiers, which is set in 1967 and shows Foreign Bodies being submitted, somewhat belatedly, to the censorious attention of the Lord Chamberlain in St James's Palace. Once again Nichols demolishes bourgeois respectability, showing one of the theatrical censor's military aides to be a frantic pursuer of passing guardsmen and the other to be a dirty-minded smut-hound whose working motto is "if in doubt, take it out". As in the first piece, Nichols also plays post-modernist games showing the characters finally rebelling against their author. Nichols's basic point that

the 1960s was a confused decade in which the new-found sexual freedom confronted residual moral conventions is not startlingly original. He also sometimes goes for easy targets by suggesting that middle-class Shropshire masons are secret transvestites given to wearing French maids' uniforms or that the official guardians of our morality are lecherous hypocrites. The real fun lies in his anti-naturalistic anarchy and Carry On jokes. Nichola McAuliffe, in particular, is a joy as, in the first play, a queasily Shropshire mum who innocently utters lines like "When I hear the word soldier I always picture privates", goes on a spectacular bender, blithely exits through non-existent walls and merrily watches the lemon from her drink sail into the front row of the stalls. Even as the drangle-stocked tea-lady in the second play she manages to make every line tell a dirty story. Barry Foster and Anton Rodgers lend dignified support as de-dressed figures of authority. Nichols's own direction is less wild and ubi-tunited than his writing, but this idiosyncratic, meta-theatrical double-bill deserves an extended life and proves the truth of Gilbert Adair's observation that the post-modernist always rings twice.

Advertisement for 'Down' magazine featuring a woman's face and the text 'The unlikely BARONESS TURNER' and 'Dial the co... Chances... aspiring... a lot of the'.

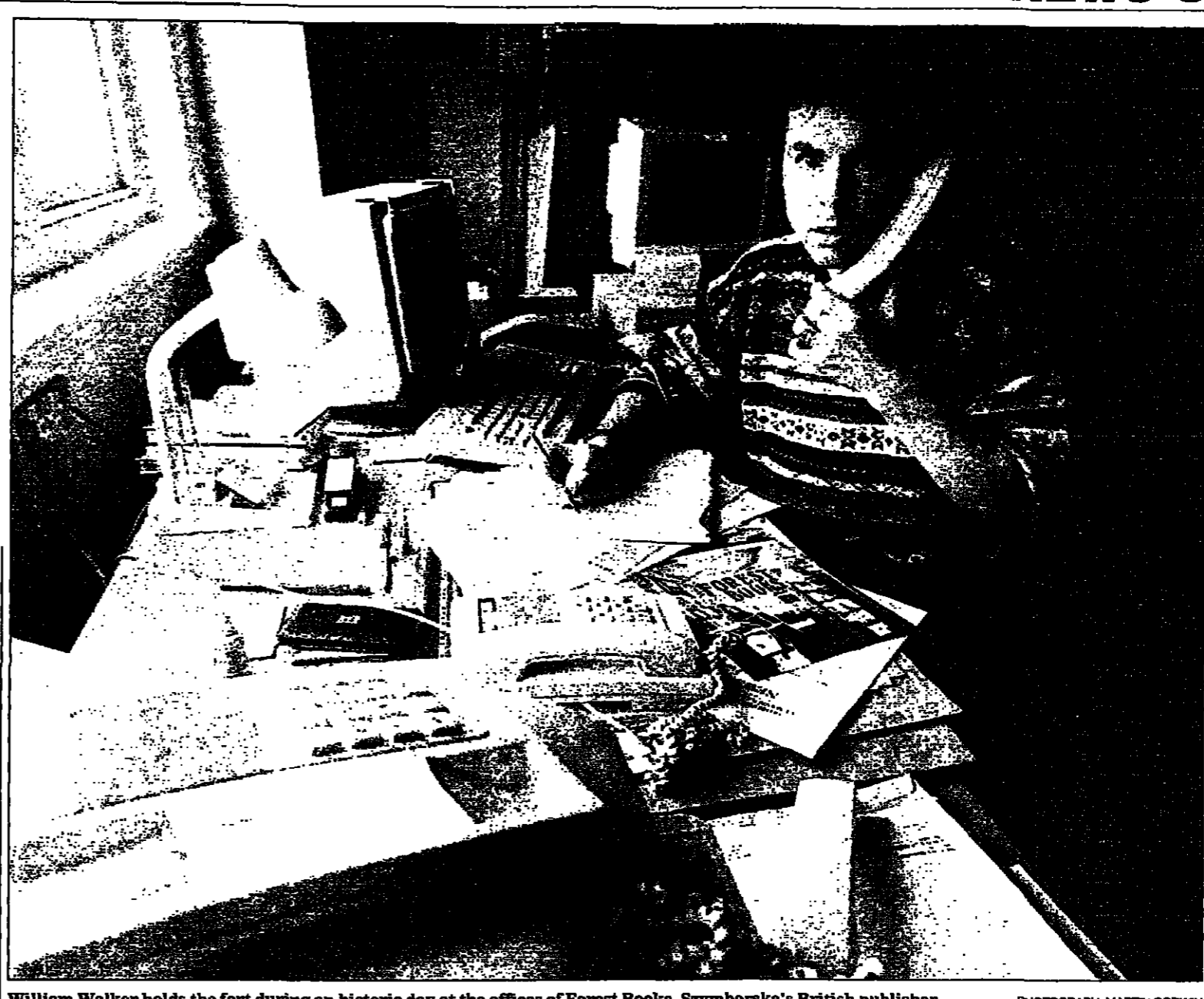


An unlikely alliance of Krakow and Essex yesterday helped a 73 year old writer win the Nobel Prize for Literature

Wisława Szymborska receiving a Polish Pen Club award

THE 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to the Polish poet Wisława Szymborska, a 73-year-old former Solidarity activist based in Krakow, writes Adam Czerniawski. Her work is little known in western Europe but her elevation to Nobel laureate is sure to change that...

and now her, it is incredible to have two poets in a row. Szymborska herself, though delighted by the award, was rather less effusive. "This is a difficult situation," she said. "I am normally a very private person and now I foresee some difficult moments..."



William Walker holds the fort during an historic day at the offices of Forest Books, Szymborska's British publisher

Down in the forest something stirred

The terrorist, he watches. The bomb will explode in the bar at twenty past one. Now it's only sixteen minutes past. Some will still have time to enter, some to leave.

Stephen Moss Literary Editor. I WAS supposed to be a quiet Thursday in the office at Forest Books, a tiny publishing house opposite the golf course in Chingford, east London.

1,000 - the entire print run - and orders were taken from across Europe, with interest especially strong in Scandinavia. It was Forest founder Brenda Walker's greatest moment, but unfortunately she was not there to enjoy it.

known", could not be said to pander to populism. Titles include An Elusive Eagle Soars: An Anthology of Modern Albanian Poetry, a collection of Slovenian short stories, and an anthology of Sorbian (yes Sorbian) poetry.

Poems and is in negotiation for the back list. Joanna Mackle, a director of Faber, said: "It may sound unlikely, but she is somebody we have been chasing for some time."



Brenda Walker: started firm as a hobby

- Winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature since 1980. 1986 Wisława Szymborska (Poland), 1985 Seamus Heaney (Ireland), 1984 Kenzaburo Oe (Japan), 1983 Toni Morrison (United States), 1982 Derek Walcott (Trinidad), 1981 Nadine Gordimer (S Africa), 1980 Octavio Paz (Mexico), 1979 Camilo Jose Cela (Spain), 1978 Naguib Mahouz (Egypt), 1977 Joseph Brodsky (United States), 1976 Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), 1975 Claude Simon (France), 1974 Jaroslav Seifert (Czech), 1983 William Golding (Britain), 1985 Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), 1981 Elias Canetti (Britain), 1980 Czeslaw Milosz (United States).

The unlikely 'disaster'

BARONESS TURNER. Lawrence Donegan. BARONESS Muriel Turner was a most unlikely candidate for the role of New Labour's biggest embarrassment in the last conference before the election.



Lady Turner... solid, safe, austere and pompons. Her politics at that time were left-wing, but as the Labour Party changed under Neil Kinnock she moved into the political mainstream.

Greer Associates in 1991 and insisted last night there was never any conflict of interest with her role in the Lords. She defended Mr Greer's payment of £10,000 to Mr Hamilton in language - using the collective noun we - which emphasised the continuing strength of her association with the lobbyist.

Duchess drops fight to ban revealing book

Stuart Millar. THE Duchess of York yesterday dropped a legal action to block publication of a book about her private life. She had taken out an injunction against Allan Starckle's Fergie, Her Secret Life. Written by the former business partner of John Bryan, it contains embarrassing details about the American financier's relationship with the duchess.

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Dial the code 01633, then six more figures. Chances are you'll get through to an aspiring pop icon because there are rather a lot of them in Newport at the moment. Friday Review page 10

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News in brief

Gun club official hid weapons in school

A GUN club safety officer was arrested by police yesterday after the discovery of live ammunition in a school where he has worked as caretaker for 10 years. Detectives in Rochdale, Greater Manchester, are questioning Paul Fell, aged 36, who supervises safety at the nearby Bury gun club, after the find at Norden community school in Rochdale.

Allwood 'recovering well'

MANDY Allwood was last night said to be making a good recovery despite being distraught after miscarrying her eighth babies. The 32-year-old divorcee from Solihull, West Midlands, is recovering at King's College hospital, London. The hospital chaplain visited her on Wednesday night and blessed by name the babies in the presence of their father Paul Hudson, aged 37.

'No risk' from HIV surgeon

A HOSPITAL last night sought to reassure more than 300 ear, nose and throat patients after revealing that a surgeon who operated on them was tested HIV positive. Officials at Whiston Hospital on Merseyside insisted there was "virtually no risk whatsoever" to the patients treated by the doctor, who has not been named. The doctor revealed in his colleagues on Tuesday that he had tested positive for the virus. He was said to be "naturally distressed" and off on sick leave.

Turk lover wants to visit son

THE Turkish lover of the 14-year-old child bride Sarah Cook, who gave birth to his baby son two days ago, has appealed to the British authorities to grant him a visa so that he can visit the child, it was disclosed yesterday. Talking to journalists after he appeared in a Turkish court on a charge of statutory rape, Musunin Komeagac, aged 18, said he was desperate to see his son and to bring him gifts given by people to his family in his home village where the couple lived together after going through a traditional betrothal ceremony. The case against him was adjourned until November 21. — Alan Watkins

Chemical explosion inquiry

HEALTH and safety experts were last night investigating the cause of an explosion that ripped through a chemicals plant near Bristol, sending a plume of toxic black smoke across towns and villages along the Severn estuary. Both motorway crossings of the estuary were closed for part of the day, sending motorists on diversions of up to 50 miles. Avon Fire Service said the explosion at the Albright and Wilson works in Avonmouth was heard in Bristol, eight miles away. Six firefighters were taken to Bristol royal infirmary after suffering breathing difficulties. Police sources said early signs were that the explosion was not caused deliberately. — Geoffrey Gibbs

Depressed missing out

MISPLACED fears that anti-depressant drugs are addictive and worries that doctors will be unsympathetic mean many people are not seeking help for depression, a survey published today says. The survey of 2,003 people, published in the British Medical Journal, found that 78 per cent believed, wrongly, that anti-depressants were addictive. Half the people in the survey thought a GP would be unsympathetic. — Chris Mihill

Bob and Paula in custody fight

BOB Geldof and Paula Yates went to the High Court yesterday as the legal battle for custody of their three children got underway. Mr Geldof applied for custody of the children following allegations that drugs were found in Ms Yates's London home while she was in Australia with her new partner, Michael Hutchence of rock group INXS. — Lawrence Donegan

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Revelations strike at heart of sacred trust and payouts to victims place heavy burden on dioceses

Abuse cases stun Catholics

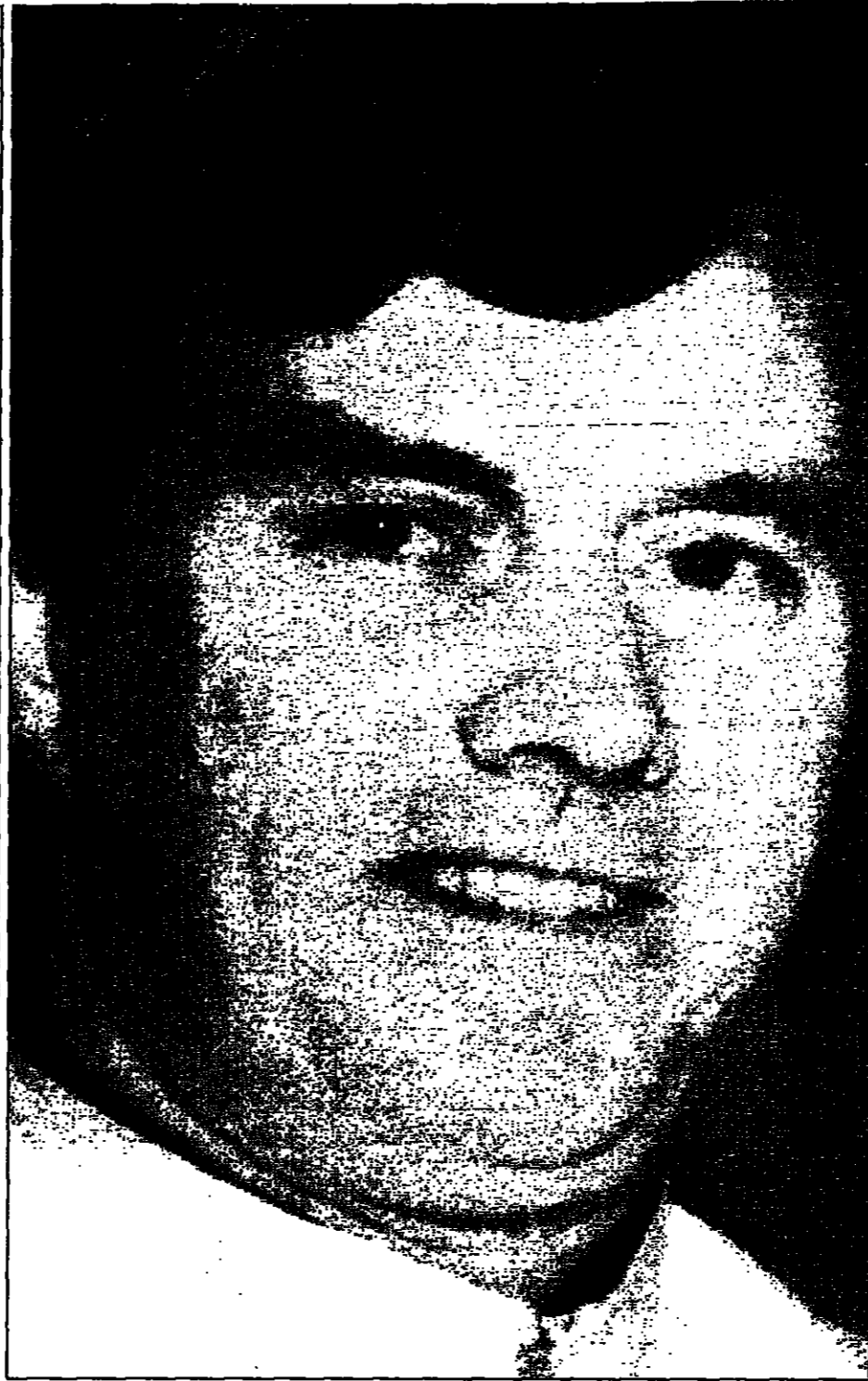
As the church has grappled with the unfamiliar issues of instituting guidelines of good practice and learning to liaise with statutory authorities, it has been hit by a wave of compensation claims resulting in huge payouts in America, Canada and Australia.

The Chicago diocese has spent about \$5 million since 1991 on compensation for clergy abusing children, and has to sell off property to reduce a deficit running into millions of dollars. In New Mexico, the diocese had to mount a special appeal to avoid bankruptcy after settling 120 claims. Only this August, the Catholic Christian Brothers in Australia paid out about \$2 million to 210 victims of physical and sexual abuse after selling property in Sydney to settle the action.

'In the UK the Catholic church is taking no risks these days'

Close to home, there were two settlements in Ireland last year, one of \$50,000 and one of \$30,000 paid to victims of priests in Dublin diocese. The Irish church is bracing itself for more claims. But the Catholic church in the UK said last night it knows of no compensation claims which have been made or are pending here. Nor is it clear, even in a case of criminal conviction of a priest, that the Catholic church itself would be liable.

Compensation has to be claimed from the perpetrator of a crime; the church only becomes liable for damages when it is proved in court that it was negligent. For example, the claimant would have to prove that the church ignored complaints, or moved the priest to another parish to avoid scandal. The purpose of the employers' liability insurance policy offered by the Catholic National Mutual — the sub-



Father Ivan Payne, a Dublin priest, who paid £27,500 compensation in 1993 to a man who claimed he was sexually assaulted by him while serving as an altar boy at a holiday camp. The money was borrowed from diocese funds

Teenager assaulted after plea for refuge

Case study

Maggie O'Kane

CHRIS, a 24-year-old Glasgow man who says he was sexually abused by a priest when he was 17, plans to force the church to pay him compensation in court.

The man says he turned to the priest after he was sexually abused at home. He was invited to come to live in a "house of prayer" in Northern Ireland where the abuse went on for three months.

"The abuse happened in the prayer room. We went in there alone, he opened the scriptures at random and then prayed to a relic of the Blessed Charles. Then he'd wish us the Peace of Christ and it would all start."

"I put up with it then, I suppose, because I had been abused at home and even though he was violating me in front of the altar it wasn't as bad as what had gone on at home."

"I only went crazy when I found out he was doing the same thing to my best friend."

"Then I found out that there were about eight of us that he was violating. After that he said it would be a good idea if I went back to Scotland. He was afraid I would blow the whistle on him and I did."

Chris went to a priest in his home parish of Glasgow and was told that his abuser would be dealt with. "Nothing happened to him. He went on to be a parish priest in Ireland."

"I'm not interested in the money."

"I just want someone in authority in the Church saying we're sorry for violating you in front of the blessed sacrament."

Tories 'poised to lurch to the right'

Survey shows most prospective candidates to be Euro-sceptics and supporters of death penalty

EWAN MACASKILL, Chief Political Correspondent

THE Conservative Party is set to lurch to the right after the general election, according to a survey of prospective candidates published today.

They are much more Euro-sceptical than the MPs they hope to replace, with none in favour of a single currency. Divisions over Europe will be a dominant theme at the party conference, which opens in Bournemouth on Tuesday.

The survey suggests that John Redwood's popularity is growing on the right, and that he is emerging as the favourite to replace John Major if there is a post-election leadership contest.

Until now, the expectation at Westminster has been that the right would outnumber the left 2:1 among the new intake. But the survey indicates this is a huge underestimation of the growing strength of the right.

It further dents the already battered leadership chances of the right-wing Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and the chances those who harbour hopes of emerging as compromise candidates, Ian Lang and Stephen Dorrell. The battle, if the Conservatives are defeated, is shaping up as predominantly a right-wing affair between Mr Redwood, Michael Portillo and Michael Howard.

The Economist contacted prospective candidates in 75 seats where the sitting Tory MP is to stand down. Most have a good chance of winning unless there is a huge swing to Labour. Forty-six returned usable answers. The sitting MPs were then asked the same questions, with 40 per cent replying.

On Europe, they were asked to rank themselves on a scale of one to five, one being the most pro-European and five the most anti-European. The score averaged out as strongly sceptical, 4.1. Among the retiring MPs the average was 3.2.

Another indicator is the death penalty, on which the retiring MPs were divided but the prospective candidates were three to one in favour. Most were coy about discussing a leadership contest, but eight mentioned Mr Redwood and several others Mr Redwood and Mr Portillo. No one mentioned Mr Clarke.

Theologian in heresy inquiry may resign from 'Wee Frees'

Survey shows most prospective candidates to be Euro-sceptics and supporters of death penalty

ERLAND GLOUSTON

ONE of Britain's leading theologians may walk out on his church after it cleared his opponents of an ultra-Calvinist conspiracy and instead accused him of heresy.

The Free Church of Scotland yesterday announced its training of the ministry committee would investigate "statements and comments" by Donald Macleod, acquitted on five charges of indecent assault earlier this year.

The decision followed an inquiry by a church committee into the events surrounding the trial, at which the judge ruled that Professor Macleod had in fact been framed by Protestant zealots — several of them Free Church office-bearers.

Prof Macleod, the 55-year-old head of systematic theology at Edinburgh's Free Church College, now faces scrutiny by many of the men

Victim of the IRA cause buried in Irish village

David Sharrock on a dignified tribute

DIARMUID O'NEILL, the IRA suspect shot dead by anti-terrorist police in west London 11 days ago, was buried yesterday according to his family's wishes — in a quiet, dignified ceremony on a hillside overlooking Courtmacsherry Bay.

O'Neill's parents, Eoghan and Theresa, had appealed for no paramilitary trappings, and individuals among the strong Sinn Fein presence stressed they were there in a private capacity. The Irish police, however, took no chances, with sniffer dogs, trained to detect explosives, used to search the graveyard and parish church at Timoleague, the quaint seaside village which the O'Neills had adopted as a refuge from their London lives.

Around 100 uniformed and plain clothes Gardaí sealed off the village from midday and Special Branch men watched the faces among the mourners.

Sean McManus, a member of Sinn Fein's ruling executive who took part in talks at Stormont with Sir Patrick Mayhew before the ending of the IRA ceasefire last year, was the most senior republican present.

Mr McManus's son, Joseph, was shot dead during a failed IRA attempt to murder a part-time soldier in Northern Ireland.

Paddy Ryan, the former Catholic priest who the British authorities have twice failed to extradite from Ireland to face terrorism charges, was also present.

Diarmuid O'Neill's Spanish girlfriend, Karmele Ereño, whose relationship with the IRA suspect has prompted a joint investigation by British and Spanish police, arrived at the church arm in arm with his mother.

Her floral wreath, wrapped in a ribbon of the Irish tricolour, bore the message: "I'll always love you. Gero Arte Kari," a Basque phrase which means "see you later".

Father James Coombes acknowledged her presence at the funeral mass by name before praising her boyfriend's family. "There hasn't been a word of self-pity, a word of bitterness, a word of recrimination. This is a very difficult occasion, there is a great deal of mystery in what is happening in our country."

O'Neill's elder sister, Siobhan, and younger brother, Shane, read prayers. Siobhan, a nurse at a London hospital, said: "May God give us the serenity to accept those things that cannot be changed, the courage to change the things that can be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Shane, aged 23, his closely cropped red hair reminding family and friends of his dead brother, said: "You shared your life with us, God give eternal life to you." The strongly English accents grated on the ears of the softly-spoken Cork folk.

It was a short walk to the graveyard, then shuffling the coffin to its final resting place. Karmele stepped forward with a single red rose, kissed its petals and tossed it in, to the gaping hole before breaking down and burying her head in the shoulder of a family member.

A message of condolence to O'Neill's family in An Phoblacht, the Irish republican weekly newspaper, includes the statement: "Deep sympathy from all POWs, White-moor" — the Cambridgeshire prison where a number of IRA terrorists are held.



Theresa and Eoghan O'Neill, with daughter Siobhan, left, and Karmele Ereño, with rose, at the funeral of Diarmuid yesterday

Straw see out regime for drug criminals... See how costs to see family's fu... 0500



Chancellor Helmut Kohl towers above the Italian prime minister, Romano Prodi, whose draconian budget may not satisfy Germany or France that Rome will keep its deficit down

The drive to qualify for monetary union by next year's deadline makes this crunch time for governments to draw up harsh budgets. **John Hooper** in Rome reports on how protests and rows, like that between France and Italy, are exposing tensions at the heart of the euro idea

Europe becomes swear word as day of reckoning looms

EVENTS in Europe this week must have brought an ironic smile to the lips of more than a few who question the wisdom of the drive for monetary union. On Monday French teachers staged a 24-hour strike in protest against plans to axe 5,000 jobs: part of an austerity budget designed to ensure that the country's financial indicators meet the criteria agreed by European Union leaders at their summit in Maastricht five years ago. On Tuesday more than German 100,000 engineering workers took to the streets to contest a new law allowing companies to reduce minimum statutory sick pay. That, too, is the product of a drive for budgetary stringency. The deadline for compliance with the Maastricht criteria is the end of next year. But now is the time governments are drawing up their 1997 budgets, making this their last chance to fall into line. The crunch has come, and its echoes are being

heard across the Old Continent. Spain's El País has a good claim to have been the most enthusiastically communitaire of Europe's newspapers. Yet earlier this week it gave pride of place on its opinion pages to a French journalist's criticisms of the institutional arrangements for monetary union. Among the last to realise that the day of reckoning has arrived was Italy's prime minister, Romano Prodi. Until last month, when he dropped in on the Spanish prime minister, José María Aznar, he seemed under the impression that the issue need not be addressed for at least a year. Until a fortnight ago, his government planned a budget with a deficit well above the limit for the lira to enter the new euro. It had been the common wisdom to doubt whether the euro area could be launched on time. But Professor Prodi's mistake was to ignore repeated French and German warnings that it could and would be.

Italian officials were then hastily ordered to cobble together a budget that would cut almost twice as deep into the deficit, and on Friday the cabinet approved perhaps the most draconian programme of tax increases and spending cuts dreamed up by a post-war Italian government. According to official figures, the average family will pay 2435 more tax. As realisation grows of the sacrifices to be made, attitudes are being transformed in a country once dominantly pro-Euro. "The word Europe, which already inspired grave misgivings — for years now every increase, cut or belt-tightening has been put down to the need to bring Italy into line with Europe — is now almost a swear word," wrote Lietta Tornabuoni in yesterday's La Stampa newspaper. "People are asking sardonically, why not go into Asia or Oceania if this is the price?"

The mood has not been improved by suggestions from the French president, Jacques Chirac, that Italy — with or without its draconian budget — will not be in shape by the end of next year. On Tuesday, Prof Prodi called in the French ambassador for a rare carpeting. The row, still simmering as the French and Italian leaders met in Naples yesterday, goes to the very heart of the reasons for — and the difficulties with — European monetary union. As events have shown since the lira followed the pound out of the ERM in 1992, a single market has difficulty working without a single currency. The subsequent depreciation of the lira has given Italian exporters a competitive advantage in the EU which is particularly resented by France. Even after backtracking on the question of Italy's readi-

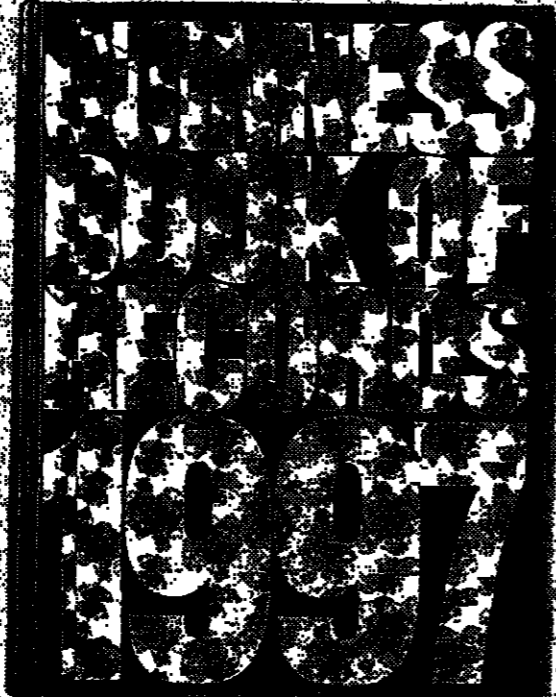
ness, President Chirac let it be known — in person and through a spokeswoman — that he wanted the lira to appreciate further before joining the euro. Italy, like the other southern countries sometimes disparagingly called "Club Med", has a poor record of budgetary discipline. So France — and to an even greater extent Germany — while worried about the Italians staying out, fears the consequences of their being let in. The euro can be the solid currency Chancellor Helmut Kohl wants only if the governments which use it keep their public finances more or less in balance. If any overpends, the others will have to under-spend to compensate. That is why the budget deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product has become the key yardstick of convergence. The worry is that the Italians in particular, having tightened their belts to get through the door, will loosen them once they are over the threshold. Indeed, Prof Prodi has suggested that is what Rome has in mind. When he presented his budget, he promised voters it would be the "last sacrifice" they would make for Europe. Spain and Portugal have made genuine, often painful, sacrifices to modernise their economies and clean up their public finances. But despite several years of reform, the factors which in Italy have contributed towards high government spending and low revenues are all still in evidence: corruption, waste and widespread tax evasion. Italy's rightwing newspaper Il Giornale pointed out yesterday that, even after the budget, 180,000 people aged between 40 and 50 were living off pensions provided by local or central government.

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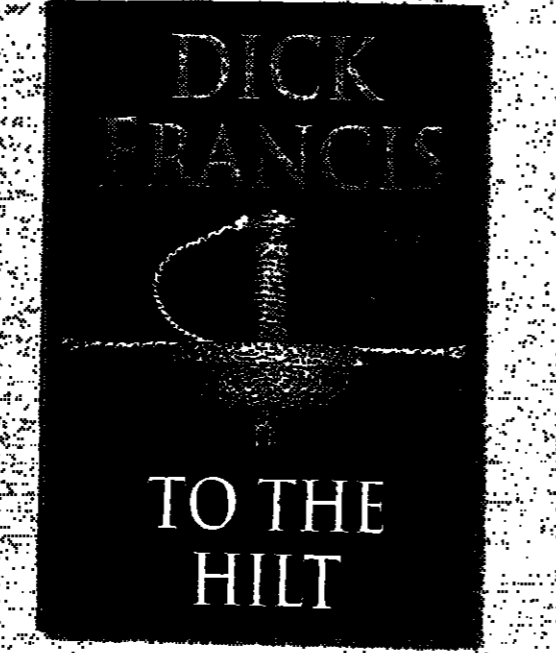
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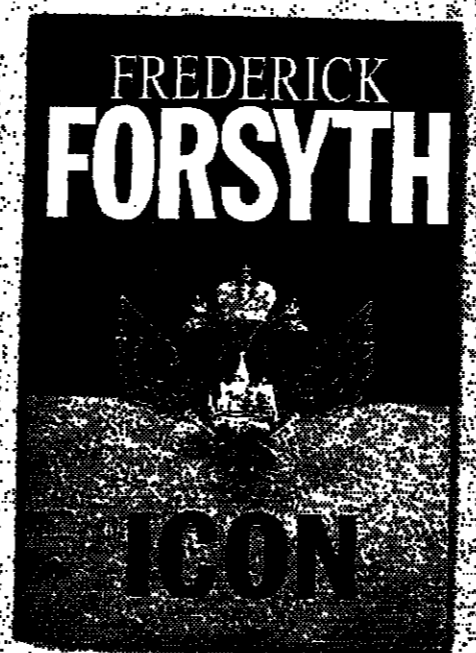
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Kohl starts countdown in Dublin to 'Maastricht Three' treaty

THE German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, has served notice that he will push for a third Maastricht treaty if the present negotiations do not result in a sufficient reform and strengthening of the European Union, writes *John Palmer in Brussels*. His call for a possible "Maastricht Three" treaty will ensure that British politics remain overshadowed by the bitter domestic debate on Europe at least until the end of the decade. Speaking in Dublin before the special weekend EU summit, Mr Kohl said that, without progress in

the treaty review, an additional treaty would be needed before the EU could absorb new members from central Europe and the Mediterranean. "If our current negotiations do not solve all the problems, then there will be a Maastricht Three," he said after meeting the Irish prime minister, John Bruton, who will host the Dublin talks. Germany, France and the more integrationist EU governments accept that the treaty now being negotiated will not make all the moves towards political union they had hoped for.

Hague's new top prosecutor demands help for tribunal

Ed Vulliamy CANADA'S leading civil liberties judge, Louise Arbour, yesterday became the new chief prosecutor at The Hague war crimes tribunal, succeeding Justice Richard Goldstone of South Africa. Judge Arbour, aged 49, takes over at a critical period for the tribunal's credibility and judicial efficacy. Most of those indicted for crimes including genocide in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda are still free. In her introductory remarks yesterday, Judge Arbour demanded that the international community enhance its efforts to aid the tribunal's investigations, even where assistance flew "in the face of short-term interests which militate against a long-term investment in peace rooted in justice. In what appeared to be criticism of I-For, the Nato force in Bosnia, she warned: "If the tribunal does not get the as-

istance that it is entitled to in its efforts to bring indicted war criminals to trial, its perceived failure may exacerbate the tensions that it was designed to appease. Justice Goldstone left saying the tribunal had little time to prove its mettle and its work had been hampered by outside diplomatic interests. Judge Arbour will hold office for four years.



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Baby hurt in gang blast

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Baby hurt in gang blast

Ed Vulliamy

THE bloody, protracted war between rival Scandinavian motorbike gangs — which has claimed six lives in the past two years — flared in Sweden yesterday when a bomb exploded in a clubhouse near Malmö used by Hell's Angels, injuring a baby and three people.

The attack just before dawn is the latest in Nordic battles for territory which echo the United States' motorcycle gang wars.

The blast wrecked the clubhouse and caused damage to buildings within a radius of several hundred yards.

"All the windows, which were boarded up, were blown out," said a police spokesman, Lars Hakansson. "Large sections of walls are down and tiles were blown off the roof."

None of the injured was connected with the Hell's Angels. Twenty families were evacuated from their homes.

Police described the explosion as a new twist in a war between the Angels and a rival bike gang, the Bandidos. In fights the gangs have used bombs, guns, knives, grenades and — on one occasion — anti-tank missiles.

The war parallels fights by "brother" gangs in the United States. The Bandidos, which is linked to a gang of the same name in Texas, is trying to challenge the underworld "authority" of the Hell's Angels.

In the bomb attack, the baby and three adults were hurt by flying glass and debris.

Three men, believed to be Hell's Angels, emerged dazed but unhurt from the clubhouse, in which it is believed they were sleeping.

The fighting began in 1994 when a Hell's Angel was shot dead in the southern Swedish port of Helsingborg.

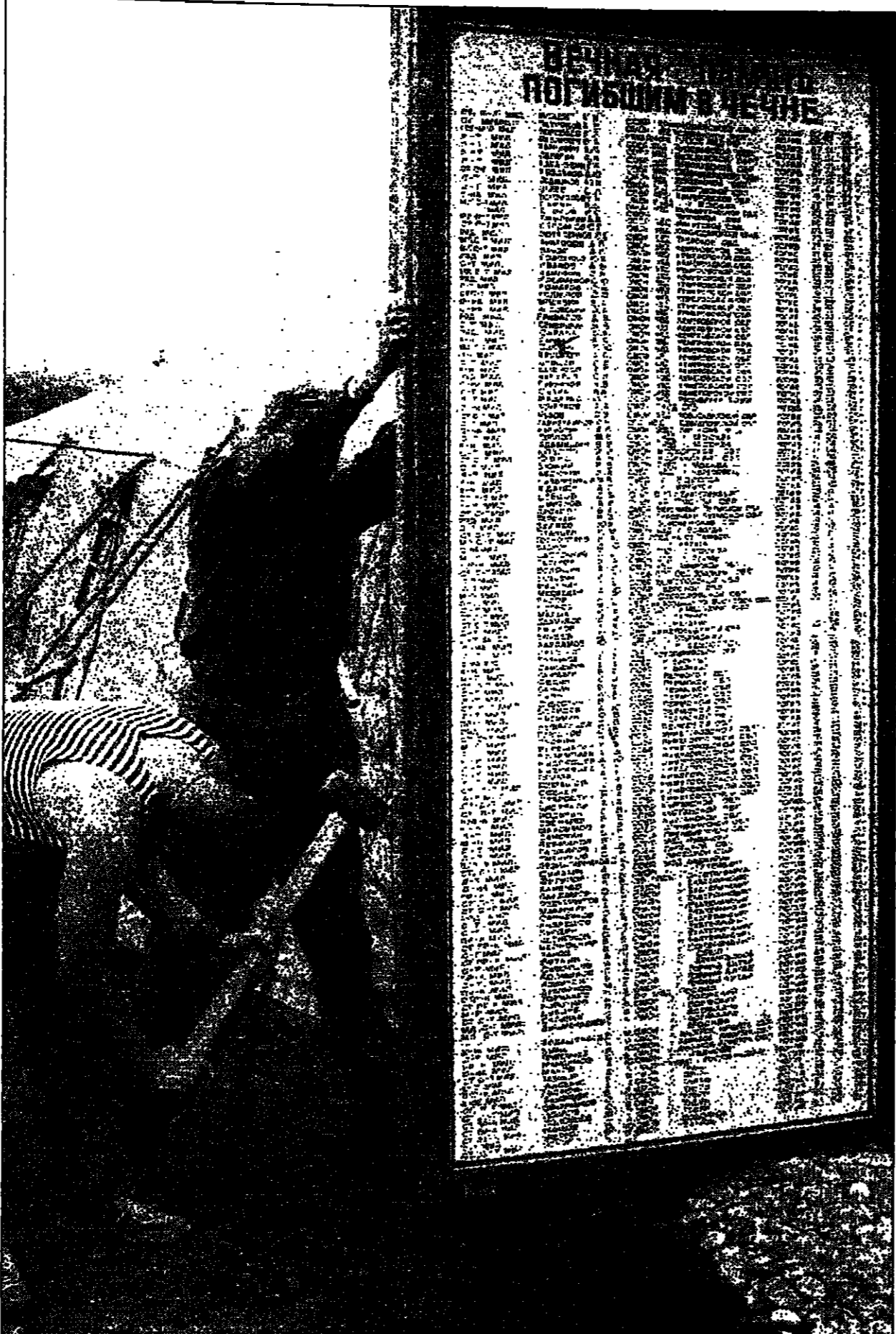
In March a Finnish leader of the Bandidos, Jarkko Kokko, was shot in Helsinki. He died of his wounds.

Nine days later a Danish Bandidos leader was killed and two companions wounded outside Copenhagen airport. In an almost simultaneous attack a Norwegian Bandido was wounded as he arrived at Oslo airport.

In July a Danish Bandido was shot in the head near the Norwegian city of Drammen.

Scandinavian politicians have called for a ban on the gangs, but a liberal tradition of freedom of association has so far ruled it out.

President goes on the air while the voiceless act out their anger. DAVID HEARST in Moscow reports



Russian soldiers in Grozny erect a board with the names of interior ministry servicemen who died during the fighting in Chechnya. President Yeltsin has praised General Alexander Lebed for helping to stop the war. PHOTOGRAPH: YURI TUTOV

Wily Yeltsin turns tables on Lebed

BORIS YELTSIN brought new life to the hospital radio by broadcasting a six-minute message from his bedside, designed to show that he was still in charge.

"I said before the elections and repeat now — don't rush to change the portraits. The country has a president and an active president at that!" the familiar voice boomed in many homes throughout Russia.

As proof that the 65-year-old patient awaiting open heart surgery had not lost his touch, Mr Yeltsin dealt deftly with a resignation threat from his security adviser, General Alexander Lebed. He turned the threat to his own advantage by ordering Gen Lebed back to work. He

pointed a picture of Gen Lebed as a squabbling prima donna who could not work with others.

He said in a later television address: "He needs to get down to business now, carry out the tasks he already has and make more effort to work with the prime minister and the other services."

"You can't quarrel with everyone all the time. You can't settle issues that way. Our state apparatus must live in peace."

Gen Lebed apparently threatened to resign over the appointment of Yuri Baturin, Mr Yeltsin's former security adviser, to a post overseeing top military appointments: a post Gen Lebed was given in July when he joined the presidential team.

Mr Yeltsin made it more difficult for Gen Lebed to carry through his threat by supporting him on the Chechnya peace deal, about which he had been so heavily criticised in parliament.

The deal received a further boost when it was formally endorsed by the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, after talks with the leader of the separatists and the self-proclaimed president of Ichkeria (Chechnya), Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

Both leaders signed a declaration of principles, establishing a joint commission to set up new government structures and organise local elections.

Mr Chernomyrdin called the document a "big step in the right direction".

Russians suffer in silence

An emergency plan has been made for a mass evacuation from the Arctic

WINTER is coming and for the first time in decades Russia is unprepared for it. Fuel and food are so low in the Arctic north that the ministry of emergency situations has plans for a mass evacuation.

The far eastern region of Primorski Krai is crippled by power cuts, because it too is unable to pay fuel bills. Most factories are still working at a fraction of their workers sent away on unpaid leave. Most soldiers have not been paid since July and many miners since May.

Outside Moscow and St Petersburg, all the conditions exist for the social explosion — or at the least a general strike — which communist and nationalist deputies have long been predicting. But it has not happened.

Funerals attract larger crowds than political meetings. Picket lines around the White House, the seat of federal government, are two a penny: ministers drive through them, their banners flap impotently in the autumn wind, their

shouts are drowned by the rush-hour traffic. No one even bothers to stop and ask them who they are.

People who cannot make their voice heard turn to desperate acts. Last week a worker walked up to the city administration building in Abakan, a large industrial centre in Siberia, and set himself alight. Mikhail Gerasimov was taken to hospital with 80 per cent burns, murmuring: "No work, no money, how to live."

In Kamchatka, Lieutenant Yevgeny Golubev, personal aide to the captain of a naval escort ship, shot himself. He had just been paid in June. He left his wife the following message: "Anichka, excuse me, if you can, but I am tired. Finally all my problems have ended. Take care of Nastya [their daughter]."

The Zil factory, which made the limousine of the Soviet elite, is like a ruined city. Production lines designed to build 200,000 lorries a year turned out just 5,000 in the first six months of this year.

Last week stray dogs roamed around the director's entrance, where the official picket should have been. The pickets had knocked off an hour early.

Only 20,000 of the factory's 70,000 workers are left, and of these 4,000 are working in its kindergar-

tens, clinics and hostels. Most are unemployed, although they are still technically registered at the factory.

The chairman of the Zil trade union committee, Mikhail Alliluyev, tried unsuccessfully to organise a co-ordinated strike with other trade unions. "So this was what worker solidarity has come to," he said.

Zil is being rescued by the government, which has promised to buy its lorries and open credit lines to get production rolling again.

Mr Alliluyev is cautious about "throwing stones which don't reach their target".

Everyone knows the target is not the local management, but the government. "You in the West have laws and courts," he said. "Here you are not defended in any way. You can be killed. You can be trampled on."

Besides if it were possible to organise a political strike, there would be a civil war. You know how all this happens in Russia. At first nothing happens and then when the problems comes to the extreme and there is an explosion in which everyone is beaten, whether they are responsible or not."

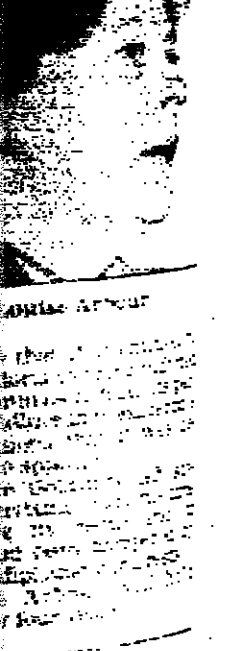
It was the fear of a *bunt* (uprising) that kept things so quiet on the streets.

Down in Dublin

'treaty

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Blair steers for office

But the Tories must avoid the rocks next week

BARRING any improbable last minute embarrassments over the Red Flag this morning, this has been Labour's most united and successful party conference of modern times. At its high point, Tony Blair made an enthusiastically received speech which skillfully reached out to the different wings of the party without sacrificing any of the principles which have made his leadership so effective in winning public support for Labour. Party leaders managed to broker a deal over the only issue - pensions - which had genuinely threatened to disrupt the week. There were few moments if any to disturb the party managers, and even those about which they were apprehensive - like Baroness Castle's appearance on Wednesday - helped in the end to cement the party rather than to pull it apart. The week has been marked by some very effective political interventions, of which yesterday's Dunblane presentation was especially powerful. And last night the conference voted to adopt Mr Blair's wide-ranging Road to the Manifesto document, the next stage in a consultative process which will now take in all party members before it is finally confirmed next month. Mr Blair will helicopter out of Blackpool this afternoon a deservedly happy man.

All in all, Blackpool has been just what Labour ordered. Mr Blair and his team have got their way over everything, mostly without a serious fight and in all cases without disturbing the surface calm. Mr Blair is now in total command of his party, but there is absolutely no doubt either that the party is consensually performing as one. It is overwhelmingly focused upon defeating the Conservatives at the coming election, and there is almost no pocket of resistance to the voluntary self-discipline which nowadays characterises the Labour Party in a way that, a decade ago, it distinguished the Con-

servatives. Even on issues which everyone knows divide the party in private, there has been undented unity in public. Deeply contentious and important questions like the European single currency, Scottish devolution and child benefit all came and went without significant or even any dissenting voices heard. Anyone who threatens to create a discord, like Baroness Turner last night, is summarily dumped overboard. Party this reflects the party's own overwhelming wish to win, but it is also a tribute to the fact that Labour has now built itself the most formidable party machine in British politics. Those who imagine that divisions will re-emerge once the short-term goal has been reached are deluding themselves.

All of this has been achieved at a price. Labour is by no means fully prepared, either organisationally or culturally, for the immense transformation which government would bring. It has yet to find a way of conducting an intelligent, grown-up debate about serious issues without everything being treated as a loyalty test. But Labour's self-discipline is a reaction against the party's catastrophic experiences of the 1980s. Those events still cast a shadow. That is why this was the week that the party managers had feared. If it had gone wrong, the fallout would have dictated the whole pre-election agenda. It could even have tempted John Major to cut and run in a snap autumn election. That is not going to happen now. The only party that may stumble this autumn is the Conservative Party, and Bournemouth next week will be a much more dangerous political event than anything that has happened at Blackpool. British politics is approaching the general election with the government seemingly destined for opposition and the opposition, after a formidable week in the north, heading for government.

Middle East talks on a tinder

Mr Netanyahu should swap immaturity for statesmanship

A SUMMIT conference which concludes with one side (Israel) hailing it a success and the other side (the Palestinians) lamenting that it has failed is founded in ambiguity and may collapse very quickly as a result. It was followed yesterday by a comparatively quiet day on the West Bank, but this was a shaky lull with Hamas already threatening to take action today. On the positive side, the willingness of both leaders to go to Washington did indicate an awareness that the situation was whirling out of control. But if there is a sort of peace, it is the peace of grave disquiet.

In their Washington talks, Yasser Arafat's priority demands, from setting a date to withdraw Israeli forces out of Hebron to closing the infamous archaeological tunnel in East Jerusalem. It is a sign of Mr Arafat's weakness that he still gave the Israeli prime minister what he needed: a commitment to resume negotiations which implies that Palestinian anger will be kept under restraint. The optimistic view is that Mr Netanyahu has also taken on an implicit obligation to move on Hebron very soon, setting some kind of time-scale for withdrawal. But it is an assumption which Mr Arafat clearly did not feel entitled to claim.

Mr Arafat and Mr Netanyahu had managed to shake hands before leaving the White House but it was a very different mood from the famous handshake three years ago between Mr Arafat and Mr Rabin. The dominant image

now is that of the two leaders sitting in awkward silence while President Clinton, not much more at ease, conducted the end-of-summit press conference by himself. Mr Clinton begged the people of the Middle East to "give us a change to make this thing work in the days ahead" - a remarkable confession, on behalf of those who should be in charge, that they are close to losing their grip.

The situation on the ground draws less attention unless stones are being thrown or guns are fired. But it is grim to the point which makes a near-mockery of diplomatic discourse. In Hebron, 94,000 Arab residents remain under curfew - allowed just three hours out of their homes yesterday - while 450 Jewish settlers can move around town freely. Travel across the West Bank continues to be severely restricted, compounding the hardship already caused by the ban on entry of Palestinian workers into Israel. Israeli tanks are in position with open threats from their commanders to use them against renewed Palestinian violence - a disproportionate force with a vengeance. One bright countervailing signal was the huge rally on Tuesday night organised by Peace Now in Tel Aviv, and the sober criticism widely voiced in the Israeli press against the wilful immaturity of Mr Netanyahu. Expectations must now be low: getting through to the resumption of talks (at a lower level) on Sunday will be an achievement. But something will have to give, or be given, very soon.

An inquiry in need of resources

Sir Gordon needs professional help if he is to move quickly

IT IS a rich irony that the first new victim of the Hamilton Affair should be from the Labour benches. The Opposition moved quickly to remove Baroness Turner from her role as Lords Spokesman on Employment once she publicly defended Ian Greer, on whose board she sits. Lady Turner seems to have been guilty of little more than naivety, but she has paid for it with her job. There is a stark contrast with John Major's continuum mouse-like silence on Neil Hamilton's already proveable guilt of lying to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr Major has at least confirmed his willingness to hand over all government documents to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner. It is vital now that Sir Gordon moves with all speed, and that his Commons Privileges and Standards Committee urgently makes available to him all the resources he needs - including the support of the lawyers and accountants

who can help him interpret the vast documentation that is about to land on his desk. It would be a scandal if the course that Mr Hamilton has now cynically adopted should find itself unable to produce a report before the General Election. Yet time is short, there is a huge amount of documentation to sift through and many witnesses to see.

There is one other matter. One of the members of the committee which will eventually receive Sir Gordon's report is Doug Hoyle, the Labour MP for Warrington. Since it has now been disclosed that Mr Hoyle's 1987 election fund received a donation of £500 from Ian Greer Associates he will surely see that it would be inappropriate to sit in judgement on these matters. It would be better if he were to step down from the committee speedily - thereby drawing a further contrast between Labour's response and John Major's unwillingness to act over Mr Hamilton's lie.



Letters to the Editor

The fathers fight back

READING Sean French's article (Tales of ordinary life, October 2), I was able to ignore the many references to Bob Geldof's application for "custody" of his children - a concept abolished by the 1989 Children Act.

However, I will not forgive the outrageous assertion that "the courts have a traditional presumption in favour of the mother". Just what is Mr French's authority for that wholly inaccurate statement? Does he not realise he is misinforming many vulnerable people who find themselves in the unfortunate situation of family breakdown?

There are many lawyers working in the field of family law - many of them members of the Solicitors Family Law Association - who are committed to the non-adversarial and sensitive approach to conflict resolution. It is important that people are aware of the availability of this facility. Nicola Ferryhough, Rowley Grove, Stafford.

French asserts that fathers seek to protect their "right to walk out on families", even though in his own case study Paula Yates walked out on Bob Geldof, and got custody of the kids to boot, an outcome few fathers could hope for. The real tragedy is that fathers like Geldof have to cling to misconduct allegations to have any chance of bringing up their children.

Given the chance, nobody suggests they do a worse job than their ex-wives, but the judiciary persists in protecting and perpetuating our stereotypes. That way mothers stay maternal and single mothers stay poor, the better to be scapegoated by Michael Howard. M C Pires, rue Marx Dormoy, 75018 Paris, France.

SEAN French dismisses the plight of responsible fathers denied fair access to their children on the grounds that other fathers behave less than responsibly. Why not take each case on its merits? Feminists fail to realise that their demands on men to give up their traditional economic privileges must be matched by equal willingness in women to sacrifice their traditional emotional privileges, including ones concerning custody of children. Peter Totman, Aston Road, Raynes Park, London SW20.

THERE may be many fathers who don't want equal rights for their children but there are many, including myself, who do, who are willing to look after their children but are denied the opportunity to do so (or in some cases even contact) by mothers.

To suggest, as Mr French does, that fathers are somehow incapable of looking after their children is complete prejudice, which is unfortunately often upheld by the courts.

Mr French's stereotyping does not stop at fathers. His depiction of single mothers (sworn-out, lower blocks, etc) is equally insulting to the majority of single mothers who do not fit this image. Stephen Hall, Southampton Street, Brighton BN2.

SEAN French lambasts Bob Geldof's campaign for fathers' rights. Why doesn't he imagine the following scenario? Tomorrow his adulterous wife divorces him, is awarded the family home, and refuses to allow access to his children.

Not a nice thought, but a genuine one for an increasing number of fathers today. Contact orders, though usually granted by the courts, are effectively unenforceable. Responsible fathers and innocent children are the true victims. Richard Gregory, Carthew Villas, London W6.

Why a decent pension policy will pay dividends in the future

BARBARA Castle and Peter Townsend (Castle did declare war in pensions figures fight, October 1) continue proposing a pension reform which would cheat millions of pensioners. That has been the outcome of Serps and their campaign has been all about deceiving the poorest pensioners once again.

While it was understandable for Barbara Castle to introduce Serps in the 1970s, it has had its benefits halved by the Tories, only for its proposed budget to be halved yet again. Millions of pensioners signed up to Serps believing Barbara Castle's rhetoric that they would get generous pensions. They now know they have been sold short.

No Labour government can guarantee that a future Tory administration will not wreck a rebuilt Serps scheme as proposed yet again by Barbara Castle. That is why it is important to find a way that is open to such brutal government action. Extending funded pensions offers the best chance, and a challenge for a future Labour government will be to make this provision universal. Frank Field MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

YOUR leader (October 1) looks at facts the wrong way round. The truth is the reverse: there will be no growth without fairness. Here is a case in point.

As one of this country's poorest pensioners, when my 15-year-old iron recently packed up, I could not afford to buy a new one. My daughter, who bought a new iron herself only six months ago, gave me her old one, the same model as my defunct one, but only 12 years old. Economic result: one new iron sold between two people, instead of one new iron each - therefore manufacturers' and distributors' income halved.

If the younger generation will not bludgeon government of whatever colour into fairness, they can start saving up chests of drawers and storage units, cut up their cereal packets for writing paper, and their old copies of the Guardian for toilet paper. Felicity Crow, Spring Cottage, Middle Spring, Ruscombe, Stroud, Glos.

PERHAPS a Labour government will not only look at the mechanism for increasing state pensions, but also at the

base cost of the pensioners' shopping basket. The old come out very badly from being tied to the national average consumption.

The whole trend of the market economy is the reduction of prices where larger markets can be won. Thus the RPI is reduced as new products such as electronics achieve massive consumption. So, for example, the lower prices of camcorders or mobile phones actually reduce the state pension. Even in the pricing of services a similar process applies. Standing charges for utilities go up while greater consumption is rewarded by lower unit prices.

There is also a difference in purchasing patterns in services. As people become old they have to abandon DIY activities. They are forced to rely on contractors for home maintenance, decoration and repairs. Call-out charges are not cheap.

The expense of being old is computed in real wood. The old age that two can live as cheaply as one is reversed. One must live as cheaply as two. Joe Ball, 9 Broadlands Close, London N6 4AF.

I AM prepared to vote for any party which will do something to help my friends. She and I are both over 60, but her income is about £56 a week while mine is about £105. Tess suffers from three big disadvantages: ● She isn't entitled to a full single person's pension. For the DSS, your working life is regarded as 44 years, and you need to have actually worked and paid stamps for almost the whole of this to be entitled to the full basic pension. Tess and I had both worked for less than the prescribed period, and she also had paid the old "married-woman" low-rate stamps so that when we came to draw our pensions we found ourselves allocated less than £30 a week each.

● Tess is not a widow. She has been deserted by her husband, who pays her no maintenance. So the only state help she can get is to have her pension topped up by Income Support to about £56 a week. I am a widow, and receive the state widow's pension plus the widow's half of my late husband's occupational pension - a total of £109 a week.

I am sure that there must be many other pensioners with the same or similar problems. Cannot their position be eased somehow? Name and address supplied.

The last word

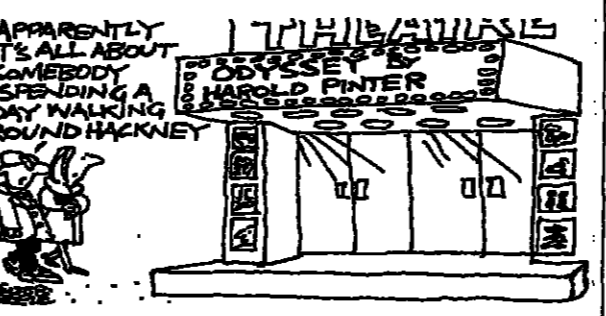
CONTINUING your quest for the worst in modern bollockspeak (Letters, October 3, 2, 1), what about the Sincere-o-Matic synthesiser that help keep the privatised utilities enquiry-proof and BT solvent? "All our operators are busy right now. Your call will be answered in approximately... one... four... minutes. Please hold." Arthur Wardell, 7 Claremount Road, Boothtown, Halifax HX3 6NX.

ON a recent trip to southern Poland, our interpreter (who speaks more European languages fluently) told us that he had discovered what he regarded as the most precise word in any language: bollocks. He said he had found it most valuable in the university where he worked, as it was immediately understood, without translation, by workmates and students alike. Eric Lawson, 19 Grasemere Road, Marsh, Hinderfield HD1 4LH.

WHAT a shoddy headline you gave to my father Leslie's obituary (Come on downmarket, September 30). You accused him of lack of judgment in his choice of material. I think your heading showed an extraordinary lack of taste. Liz Crowther, Popesgrove Gardens, Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1.

THE nature lobby (Guardian September 27) should be cautious in asking for too many roads, hedgehog and now other tunnels under motorways. Some years ago, when living near the motorway triangle between the M25 and M26, I noticed the area was devoid of squirrels, and some years later had the opportunity of re-introducing red squirrels, which are still, I believe, doing very well. Peter Abbott, Church Street, Darton, Barnsley S75.

Please include a full postal address, even on e-mailed letters, and a telephone number. We may edit letters; shorter ones are more likely to appear.



Pinter and betrayal: Act II

MICHAEL Billington's observations about Harold Pinter (Acts of betrayal, September 24) contain, in essence, nothing new. In my 1973 study of Pinter, I demonstrate that the dramatist drew upon his own life and experience, and transmogrified these facts into great drama and poetry.

Prior to the publication of my work, Pinter sent me a set of telegrams - still in my possession - asking me not to publish certain bibliographical details concerning his early writings, which he wished to suppress. He then changed his mind. Some of this material concerns brilliant essays written whilst he was a schoolboy at Hackney Downs School and one in particular deals with the young, 15-year-old Pinter referring to James Joyce, especially to Dubliners and Ulysses. Pinter

observes that "even though (Joyce) spent most of his life abroad, all his work was about Dublin, which was the one great influence of his life - a great Irish Catholic shadow that forever lay over him." In Pinter's case, it is still a great Hackney-London Jewish shadow that lays over him, compounded by subsequent experiences such as a traumatic divorce, betrayals, and coming to terms with establishment acceptance.

It is pleasing to know that all these years later Michael Billington has only rediscovered what was there before in print, but we go on betraying, don't we? ... The irony is that the process never ends." (Prof) William Baker, Department of English, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois 60115-3863, US.

Pro-life, when it's worth living

THE correspondents objecting to Prof Nicholas Wald's comparison of stroke prevention with pre-natal screening (Letters, October 1) have confused the issue by equating the interests of a potential human being with those of a living person. Once someone has been born, with or without a genetic defect, that person is entitled to all the care and support they need to live as full a life as possible. Malcolm Hurwitt, 51 Minster Avenue, Southall, Middx UB8 4EP.

hard to draw too strong a picture of this experience. After a successful operation at Harefield Heart Hospital, I am completely cured. Unlike your correspondents, one of whom accepts spina bifida and breast cancer as not being reasons for prophylactic abortion, I would have anyone doomed to the lifelong experience that I had to endure aborted. Such suffering should never be inflicted on anyone. Your correspondents fail to differentiate between making the best of a bad job and inflicting such horrible experiences on the unborn. (Dr) A Sandman, Sharpleshall Street, London NW1.

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: Every morning at first light, Jim Martin, warden of Northumberland Wildlife Trust's nature reserve at Hauxley, north of Druridge Bay, parades his 67-acre patch. He checks bird and animal species and the five hides there (these have recently been vandalised). In June he was listening to what he at first thought was a sedge warbler but noticed a distinctive harsh note in the call. "I recognised it as a reed warbler," he said. "Two weeks later I saw the bird carrying food in its beak so I knew it must be nesting nearby." Jim actually saw the insects in the bird's beak without the aid of binoculars. Weeks later he found the reed warbler's nest, a work of art built around three or four reed stems and by then abandoned. These nests are interesting because they are attached to young reeds and, as these grow, the nest rises on its supports. This nest represents the most northerly breeding site of the species on record in the county. For the

second year in succession a little ringed plover has nested at the reserve and this summer raised three chicks. A gadwall, which superficially resembles a female mallard, nested here for the first time, hatched eleven chicks and fledged seven of them. I studied the blackbird in the Hauxley visitor centre and counted an impressive tally of butterflies recorded. "This has been a great summer for butterflies," said Jim. "Hundreds of painted ladies, a migratory species from the continent and an unusual number of common blues."

It is encouraging to hear that there are ambitious plans for the opencast recovery land adjacent to Hauxley soon to get underway. A hundred acres of flagmeads (these are big ones like those on the Norfolk marshes); 60 acres of linked ponds with East Chevington woodland. The aim is to attract bittern, marsh harrier, bearded tits and, of course, more reed warblers. VERONICA HEATH

John 1:1-5

Diary

Matthew Norman

AMONG the more radical measures in his... speech, Mr Tony Blair once again focused on the information superhighway...

SANE and rational Paul Johnson is on top form in the Spectator with a topical piece on Thomas Jefferson...

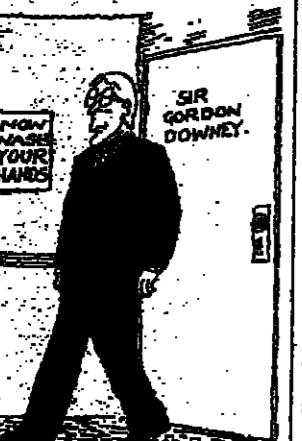
DISTURBING rumours reach me of a cooling between Dolly Draper and Oofy Wegg...

ALSO helpful in winning elections is affecting an interest in the local football team...

I AM captivated by a Daily Mail interview with Christine Hamilton. "As Neil has pointed out..."

HAVING become the oldest person to bungee jump a 102m canyon in Queenstown, New Zealand...

MEANWHILE, in neighbouring Australia, a teenage contraceptive thief has been shown mercy by the bench...



Danger: Parliament turning a deaf ear

Commentary

Peter Preston

B EEN there, done that: not looking forward ecstatically to doing it again...

So, off with the old, on with the new. But what was the old really like?

Draper and Oofy Wegg, both of whom wish to be Mandy Mandelson's number-one helper...

ALSO helpful in winning elections is affecting an interest in the local football team...

I AM captivated by a Daily Mail interview with Christine Hamilton...

HAVING become the oldest person to bungee jump a 102m canyon in Queenstown...

MEANWHILE, in neighbouring Australia, a teenage contraceptive thief has been shown mercy...

THE HFEA has now been in existence for five years, and it is time to ask if it is doing any good...

committee concludes that Neil Hamilton was "imprudent" not to have registered his week at the Ritz...

word to describe countries that have laws to make women have abortions is fascist.

THROUGHOUT the second half of this century the state has been reluctantly, though progressively, pulled back from its control over the bodies of its citizens...

So what should the HFEA do? Today Naomi Pfeffer, a medical historian at North London University...

And she, in other words, is infertile women who pay for the HFEA, for two-thirds of its funding is creamed off the fees they give to the clinics.

Its register of clinics is, she says, completely useless. It does not tell the public what an if it provides the services she needs...

In the old days, what the HFEA does would have been handled by the Department of Health instead of this quango...

moned grilling on June 21, 1995. It resulted in an interminable while to decide to call Mr Al Fayed (November 1, 1995, a full year after that parliamentary "emergency")...

THE force of Nolan was to say, with high urgency, that such malaproposities of delay and all-round political calculation could not endure...

Sir Gordon is, at root, a servant of the House. His findings go to a sub-committee and then to a full committee.

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The Tory MP and the holiday in the Bahamas



Bel Littlejohn

GO get him, lads - and then give him a kick in the groin from Bell! That was my first thought on seeing Wednesday's front page of the Guardian...

By this time, I had, of course, risen to the giddy heights of Chief Leader Writer - the previous incumbent had been forced to resign after the Editor had been informed by an anonymous source...

MY first contribution roundly castigated the Thatcher government for the gross immorality of its plans for a poll tax.

So what should the HFEA do? Today Naomi Pfeffer, a medical historian at North London University...

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Pause, think again

Who should be in charge of a woman's fertility? Should the present authority be strengthened - or should it be aborted? Linda Grant wants to see more thought before more action

THIS week the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority told a woman that she could not have a child on the grounds that he was no longer in this world to give his written permission...

Good-bye battery



Welcome to the future: Seiko Kinetic, the first quartz watch that turns your movement into power. Every move you make is converted into electrical impulses by a tiny built-in powerhouse.

SEIKO KINETIC Seiko Kinetic at: http://www.seiko-corp.co.jp

Joonas Kokkonen

Composer lit by northern light

A COMPOSITION, according to the Finnish composer Joonas Kokkonen, who has died aged 74, is a biological entity. "It begins from a mystery, from some unfathomable silence," he said. "It grows like a tree from a seed. The germ possesses a fantastic capacity for growth. Many people think that the growing power of the initial motive is its most important feature. However, the gist of the matter is the extent of its growth. This is the most important concern in creating a large form."

Kokkonen was Finland's most distinguished composer since Sibelius and shared with his countryman a genius for the organic development, from the simplest successions of intervals, of large and imposing musical structures.

Kokkonen was a friend of the greatest Finnish architect of the day, Alvar Aalto, who designed the composer's house in Järvenpää, just as Lars Sonck had done for Sibelius in the same town half a century before. This fusion of the complete with the structural, forward, expressive, in a language whose emotive force could be readily appreciated by audiences unversed in contemporary trends, achieved for Kokkonen's music international renown with critics and public alike. This success was all the more remarkable since Kokkonen's music, if not as extreme in means as much that was being written at the time in Central Europe and in the United States, was often radical in expression. He was one of the first composers in Finland to adopt

elements of Schoenberg's 12-note method of composition, although he never entirely abandoned tonality. Nor did he become an out-and-out serialist in the way that his pupil Paavo Heininen would do.

Kokkonen's rigorous self-criticism kept his output relatively small, amounting to some 50 compositions. These are of consistently high quality, covering the standard forms from opera to song, symphony to sonata. Many pieces from his mature period, which ran from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s (corresponding to the gestation period of his only opera, *The Last Temptations*), have established themselves in the repertoire. Particularly prominent are his orchestral works, including four symphonies remarkable for their total avoidance of Sibelian influence. From the outset, Kokkonen evolved a very individual variant of the symphony as a genre, with one or two fast movements framed by a pair of reflective, slower-paced spans. After the premiere in 1961 of his *First Symphony*, composed the previous year, Kokkonen was hailed as "a new comet in the Finnish musical sky". The hope was expressed that the "comet" would become a "fixed star", a sentiment fulfilled at least in part later that year with the receipt of a prize from the Wilho Kallio Foundation (a second followed in 1978) and by the award of the Nordic Council's prestigious music prize in 1968 for his *Third Symphony* (1967). Other orchestral works include *Music for String Orchestra* (1957), the *Symphonic*



Joonas Kokkonen... Finland's most distinguished composer since Sibelius SUZIE MAEDER

MA in musicology from Helsinki University in 1948. Probably his most important contribution in this field was the identification, supported by the composer's widow Aino, of the organ piece *Sursum Cordis* (Funeral Music, 1831) as having been derived by

Sibelius from his then incomplete, and subsequently suppressed, *Eighth Symphony*. In his last years Kokkonen, like Sibelius, hinted at a final symphony not yet in complete form. But although some musical dictionaries list this *Fifth Symphony* as having been premiered in 1962, it was in fact, like the *Fourth Quartet*, never committed to paper.

Guy Richards

Joonas Kokkonen, composer, born November 13, 1921; died October 1, 1996

Letters

Dennis J. Bird writes: For two years, I was adjutant to Wing Commander Clive Beadon (obituary September 16) when he was station commander at RAF Butzweilerhof in Cologne. On Sunday, August 13 1961, he and I were in remote rural Germany on a car rally in his big Armstrong Siddeley. Suddenly over the radio came the news that the East Germans had started building the Berlin Wall and were stopping all travellers leaving. Was this, perhaps, the prelude to a take-over of all Germany by the Russians? On that momentous day, no one knew, "we'll finish the rally first," said my CO in the true spirit of Francis Drake. And we did.

Among his many interests were Bentley cars (it was through the vintage Bentley club that he met his second wife), scuba-diving and chinchilla breeding. His German secretary spent a good deal of her time arranging deals for him with other breeders.

Clive Beadon was a memorable character: urbane, charming, very like Cecil Parker, the film actor. There are few of his kind left.

F Hall writes: Edward Pearce has his former colleague wrong (obituary September 4). The Hola massacre occurred in Kenya in a Mau Mau detention camp, not in Malawi.

Garath Bevan writes: Paul Boateng must have very vague memories of *Mission: Impossible* and is obviously not watching the reruns on Channel 4, or he would know that the character Greg Morris (obituary September 3) played was Barney Collier, not Harry Collier.

Roger Clements writes: Your obituary of Professor Bill Mackenzie (August 20) did not mention his great personal kindness. As one of his minor proteges at Manchester University, I received nothing but immense kindness, help and courtesy from him. In more than 40 years, I've not forgotten it. He was a good chap.

Frida Knight

Music in a good cause

FRIDA KNIGHT, who has died aged 85, was a musician, biographer and campaigner who remembered being shocked into "juvenile political awareness" by Mussolini's Blackshirts. Her schooling had been cut short at 14 when she became ill with Graves' disease, a rare heart condition. She went to Sicily for part of her recovery and from there travelled north through Italy, Switzerland and Germany, where later, in Frankfurt studying music, she witnessed the clashes between Nazis and Communists.

She had learned both piano and violin from the age of eight; the violin from a niece of Joachim — and later graduated from the Royal College of Music. But her mother, the first student at Newnham to receive a first class degree, introduced her to poverty and deprivation nearer home in Cambridge, which set her on her course in life, both socially and politically.

She worked first in Manchester, organising music for the unemployed, producing plays, operas and concerts, then at extension lectures in music and theatre in Hull. There she started a Spanish relief committee and joined the Communist Party. In May 1937, she drove an ambulance from London to Murcia in Spain. In Madrid she wrote and translated articles for the Republican press office, visited the front and spoke on national radio.

She returned to England as a fund-raiser for Basque refugee children, organising meetings and concerts for



Frida Knight... expressing her sympathies in actions

them throughout the country. In early 1939 she was working with Spanish refugees in France and she returned to Paris at the end of that year. In June 1940, she was caught by the German invasion and imprisoned in Besancon for more than a year until she escaped via Marseille. She brought back a message for De Gaulle in a cigarette packet and then worked for a year with the Free French information department.

Her escape was the subject of her first book, an exciting story, told with characteristic modesty. Frida was at her best when writing about other people, notably in studies of those 18th-century radicals William Frend and Thomas Walker, and in her affectionate life of that other radical, Beethoven, a book that continually sends one back to the music. Her unpublished memoirs mention the famous people she knew, for fear, she said, of name-dropping. Indeed, she could have dropped plenty in her excellent account of Cambridge music from the Middle Ages to modern times. In all, including translations, she published 10 books, as well as contributing to newspapers and magazines.

IT WAS RARE to find her without company. All the Chinese and Russians who visited Cambridge seemed to find their way to her house; until latterly, the front door was always kept open. She loved people even more than causes, but loved causes because she loved people. Most could she live without expressing her sympathies in

Kenneth Muir

A Shakespearean devotion

THE DAY before he died, at 88, Kenneth Muir sent me his newly published essay on Shakespeare and Lope de Vega — a gesture typical of a man who until the end retained his faculties, his productivity and his belief in affording friendships by exchange of opinions.

Recognised worldwide as one of his generation's most eminent Shakespeare scholars, Kenneth Muir once told a close friend that what he most would have liked to be was a dramatist. There was nothing more about his academic career, which continued into an uncommonly active retirement as emeritus professor at the University of Liverpool. But the potential dramatist was there, and was possibly what united into one person the translator of Racine and the dramatists of the Spanish Golden Age; the editor of Shakespeare plays and Wyatt poems; the author, the superb lecturer and the politician.

Born in south London, son of a doctor who died when he was seven, Muir was educated at Eton College and St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he read English and acted in John Massfield's private theatre at Boar's Hill. His first post, in 1931, was a lectureship at York's St John's College of Education, not well suited to a poet and radical. He was sacked three times — and reinstated on the insistence of the then Archbishop of York, William Temple.

In 1937, newly married to Mary Ewen and co-author of *The Voyage to Italy*, a pioneering study of Shakespeare as a poetic dramatist, Muir moved to an English literature lectureship at Leeds University. There he taught, edited, directed and acted Shakespeare; the memory still lingers of a King Lear with G. Wilson Knight as Lear

(which he edited on the bus up Brownlow Hill and polishing off staff meetings in 10 minutes sharp).

As an author, Muir ranged widely. His critical work was informed by a now unfashionable liberal humanism which makes his books accessible outside specialist circles. His scholarship, like his personality, was fearless.

Naturally unostentatious, he was quietly proud of his achievement and not afraid to show his enjoyment of the honours it brought: the honorary degree from the University of Dijon, the fellowship of the British Academy, the presidency of the International Shakespeare Association. Kenneth Muir was reticent about personal relations and, while deeply bereft, faced stoically the death from leukaemia first of Mary his wife, then of Katherine his daughter. He leaves many friends who will be glad to know he made a good end and that his long life was literally rounded with a sleep.

Inga-Stina Ewbank

Kenneth Muir, English scholar, born May 5, 1907; died September 30, 1996



Kenneth Muir... quietly proud of his achievement

Jackdaw



Virtuous times

STATS Office for the Increase in Birth Rate, Berlin Dear Sir, As many men have died during the war, it is the responsibility of the living to care for the women and the girls in order to have a steady birth rate. You are thought to be very fit and we ask you kindly to accept this honourable duty. Because of this, your wife will not have the right to divorce you but will have to accept it as a necessary consequence of war. You are detailed to the 12th District of Berlin, comprising nine women and 17 girls. Should you feel unfit for this task, you must send the name

of a good replacement together with a certificate of incapacity signed by two doctors. Should you be able to take over another district too, you will become a breeding officer and also receive a breeding remuneration; you will also receive the birth medal first class with red ribbon. You are further exempted from all taxes and have the right to a pension. We will send you a list of the persons to be visited by you. You should start your fruitful work at once and report the results to this office after nine months. Patriotic greetings, The Personal Branch of the War Ministry.

Desperate measures in war. Apparently a copy of a letter found on a German POW in 1944. *British Journal of Sexual Medicine*

New prizes
BIOLOGY: Anders Berheim and Hognie Sandvik of the University of Bergen, Norway, for their "tasty and tasteful" report, "Effect of Ale, Garlic and Soured Cream on the Appetite of Leeches" (*British*

Medical Journal, vol 309).
MATHS: James Johnstone (FRS) Reynolds, Joseph Taddeo of US Tobacco, Andrew Tisch of Lorrillard, William Campbell of William Morris and the late Thomas E Sandifer Jr. chairman of Brown and Williamson Tobacco, "for their unshakable discovery, as testified to the US Congress, that nicotine is not addictive." **Peace:** Jacques Chatelet, President of France, for commemorating the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima with atomic tests in the Pacific. **Public Health:** Ellen Kleist of Nuuk, Greenland, and Harold Mol of Oslo, Norway, for their "cautionary" medical report "Transmission of Gonorrhoea Through an Inflatable Doll" (*Genitourinary Medicine*, vol 68, no 4). **Chemistry:** George Gobie of Purdue University, for his "blistering world record time for igniting a barbecue grill" — three seconds, using charcoal and liquid oxygen. **Literature:** The editors of the *Journal The Social Text*, for eagerly publishing research that they could not understand, that the

author said was meaningless, and which claimed that reality did not exist. (The paper, which the author admitted was a hoax, was "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity", by Alan Sokel, Social Text, Spring/Summer 1996). **Economics:** Robert J Genco of the University of Buffalo, for his discovery that "financial strain is a risk indicator for destructive periodontal disease". **Results of the annual Ig Nobel prizes for those achievements in science that "cannot or should not be reproduced" were announced on the 3rd of October at Harvard University. Apparently, a group of sensitive Nobel laureates have been lined up to present the awards prior to performing as insects in the world premiere of a mini-opera starring two mezzosopranoes as cockroaches. New Scientist**

Marketeers
CYBERGEN Techno literate and techno-hungry wired generation."

CEREBRAL "Pastimes such as reading and internet surfing."
ECO-BAGAN "Embracing holistic science, the rise of cult religions, alternative medicine, free festivals and eco-anarchy."
A-GRANDER "The blurring of the gender distinctions reflected in growing androgyny in fashion."
GLAM-BANG "Retro Seventies style with a post modern sense of irony."
STREET SPORT "The collision of sports, entertainment and street fashion. Nike meets pop promo."
Marketing folk and their in-bels. These were developed by the brainbirds behind the new *Drink Thick Head*. They have decided that British Youth fit into six different categories and according to them, *Glam Bangs, Street Sports and A-Granders* are most likely to buy their tippie. Company

Sluts and tarts
AS FOR Mary Lou Heller, she didn't have any children so there was no point speculating. But Tom said being a slut

didn't have anything to do with having children; it had to do with men, with sex, with spreading your legs for every Tom, Dick and Harry. The dictionary didn't mention Tom's meaning for the word slut. Our Oxford said slut was a sluttern or slovenly woman. But Tom said untidiness was not the point either. The point was you couldn't trust a slut. A slut did the dirty deed with

anybody who asked her; a slut rolled in the hay with all the boys only she didn't get paid for it. A prostitute was a slut, but a slut wasn't a prostitute, because a slut wasn't in it for the money. A slut was worse than a prostitute. She was too stupid to make a living at it. Tom said I shouldn't get on good terms with sluts. It was tricky enough that I was a Protestant whose best friend was a dogon, a mick i.e. a Catholic. Of course, he said, he had no worry about me in the slut department. I know you'll never be one, he said. You're just like Mother. Still, he told me I had to be careful; I was too sympathetic. I should stay away from girls who had double-barrelled names like Mary Lou Heller and wore V-neck angora sweaters that smelt of Shalimar, a perfume Mont called whore's lure. "Are sluts capable of ordinary living?" I asked. "Do they sometimes eat mashed potatoes instead of french fries and use a Brownie Hawkeye?" "Of course sluts act normal."

Tom said: "That's how they fool you. But if you could see what they do when every body goes to sleep," he added, "you would find out that sluts are every bit as disgusting as you thought."
An extract from Susan Staan's story Sluts, from Grants's new collection of writing.

Foxed again
TOWN foxes are wreaking havoc at a trap bowls club by stealing the jacks during games. The urban foxes, which live around Cheltenham Bowls Club, regularly sneak out and snatch the yellow jacks as players compete. The club is planning to surround the green with an electric fence to keep them out. *Further rising crime figures for the Government to worry over.* Country Life

Jackdaw wants jewels E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

Ken's group therapy

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on P&O's deal with

Management

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Spottiswoode squares up for stormy and personal Monopolies Commission battle with British Gas

Regulators take tough line

Celia Weston
Industrial Correspondent

GAS industry regulator Clare Spottiswoode lashed out at British Gas yesterday after the company propelled itself into its third Monopolies Commission enquiry since privatisation in 1986.



As the two sides squared up for a six-month inquiry over new price controls for British Gas's TransCo, the Director General of Ofgas attacked the BG board for personalising the issue and making a habit of rowing with the regulator, referring to the company's stormy relationship with her predecessor.

Phillip Rogerson, BG deputy chairman, claimed that the company would have to cut between 8,000 and 10,000 of TransCo's 20,000-strong workforce to meet the price cuts.



Spottiswoode... attack on Gas for personalising issue

It seems to me very weird that they believe a huge press campaign will affect what we do or what the MMC does. There's no doubt that industry and most consumer groups do not want an MMC reference," she said.

The Gas Consumers Council said it was disappointed by the referral but that there was too much at stake for either side to back down.

Customers win £4 but workers warn of risks as Littlechild gets tough with Grid

PROPOSALS to cut domestic electricity bills by £4 a year were unveiled yesterday by industry regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild, amid warnings that his plans for new price controls for the National Grid will cause extensive job-shedding and risk blackouts, writes Celia Weston.

With the City divided last night over whether the Grid will reject the proposals and seek a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry, Tony Cooper, the general secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association, warned that 800 jobs would go from a workforce already cut by nearly half to 3,400 since privatisation.

was at the lenient end of expectations.

The control, effective from next April, will cut Grid revenues by £1 billion. The Grid had hoped to force Prof Littlechild into greater concessions. In a terse statement, issued through the Stock Exchange, the company said it would respond by the October 30 deadline.

Analysts were divided over the likelihood of an MMC inquiry which would follow a rejection of the proposals by the Grid. An inquiry would last six months, running through the election campaign.

The revised price control, to operate from April next year until March 2001, requires a reduction of 20 per cent in the first year followed by a cut of four percentage points below the rate of inflation in each of the next three years.

Notebook

Test of power at business court



Edited by Alex Brummer

BITISH Gas and Clare Spottiswoode at Ofgas have been busting for a high profile punch-up at the Monopolies Commission: so referral was inevitable.

But this is not just the continuation of a history of rocky relations between two sides constantly at war since privatisation in 1986. The referral is far more significant.

It has put utility regulation into a political melting pot which will bubble away up to and beyond the election. All sides have one eye on a likely Labour victory and the party's firm commitment to shake up the watchdogs.

P&O Stena Line crossings, after initial costs savings are made the objective will be to raise passenger yields. It is a goal it ironically shares with Eurotunnel, which Lord Sterling has inelegantly described as having been "dumped into the ferry market."

Having sorted out some of the more acute difficulties Lord Sterling cannot afford to rest on his laurels. P&O remains a hotpotch of interests — ranging from house-building to property development — most seeking to eke out profits, but very few that are impressive.

Lord Sterling may be tempted now to say to his critics "I told you so" and hand over the tiller until he is forced off. Far more dignified, however, to bail out on a high and let a new management give P&O the direction it so badly lost.

Global sleaze

THE latest Damascene conversion of the World Bank occurred this week, with president James Wolfensohn calling for a crack-down against the global "cancer of corruption".

How, though, to turn the impressive-sounding words into concrete action? An influential pressure group on anti-corruption, Transparency International, has given Mr Wolfensohn some useful pointers.

First, the Bank should resist the temptation to link anti-corruption legal and political reforms to debt relief or aid. Partly because of the tricky international politics involved, but mostly because externally imposed solutions do not work.

Almost every country in the world already has laws against bribery — the problem is that many people simply ignore them. You cannot legislate for honesty.

Instead, the Bank should encourage coalitions of private and public sector against corruption. In particular, Transparency International advocates "integrity pacts" around bids for contracts — the most fertile ground for corruption.

There is also a danger of seeing corruption as a developing world problem: much of the money which is used to buy off officials in the Third World comes from the coffers of western companies.

Chairman Peter Eigen says between 5 and 10 per cent of spending abroad by corporations from the rich North may be accounted for by dubious pay-outs to officials.

Ultimately corruption can probably only be contained by a dramatic change of culture, and not just in Nigeria and Indonesia, but in London and Berlin, too.

P&O pruning

AFTER a great deal of prodding, Lord Sterling finally is coming to grips with P&O's difficulties. In a matter of weeks, he has forged a pair of joint ventures — one with Nedlloyd the other with Stena Line — which go some way to cleaning up the company's balance sheet.

Whatever undertakings are made now on the pricing of

Olivetti sell-off to raise £520m

Nicholas Barnister
Technology Editor

OLIVETTI, the troubled Italian technology group, is to raise up to 1,200 billion lire (£520 million) within two years through disposals and the flotation of its Lexikon office equipment business, its new chief executive, Roberto Colaninno, said yesterday.

Speaking to financial analysts in Milan, Mr Colaninno said he aimed to raise 300 billion lire by the end of this year by selling four businesses, including the personal computer division which has been the main cause of the group's misfortunes.

Mr Colaninno, who took over as chief executive last month, said more money

would be raised through the flotation of Lexikon on the New York stock exchange towards the end of next year.

The group is also planning to sell an 8 per cent stake in the Omnitel mobile phone company, which is regarded as Olivetti's most promising business.

Mr Colaninno ruled out any attempt to raise further funds from shareholders who injected 2,257 billion lire into the group earlier this year.

When asked about future profits, he said: "I have not yet established the plan for 1997, which will be a year of transition... but 1998 will have a positive result." The aim was to bring the company to a position where it was not eating up cash in 1997.

Olivetti has been seeking a buyer for the PC division for some years.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.5180	France 7.85	Italy 2.333	Singapore 2.1570
Austria 18.32	Germany 2.3270	Malta 0.5490	South Africa 6.85
Belgium 47.84	Greece 388.00	Netherlands 2.6130	Spain 196.00
Canada 2.0780	Hong Kong 11.80	New Zealand 2.1770	Sweden 1.5000
Cyprus 0.7085	India 55.80	Norway 9.83	Switzerland 1.50
Denmark 6.9575	Ireland 0.9600	Portugal 236.00	Turkey 139.237
Finland 8.077	Israel 4.98	Saudi Arabia 5.83	USA 1.5295

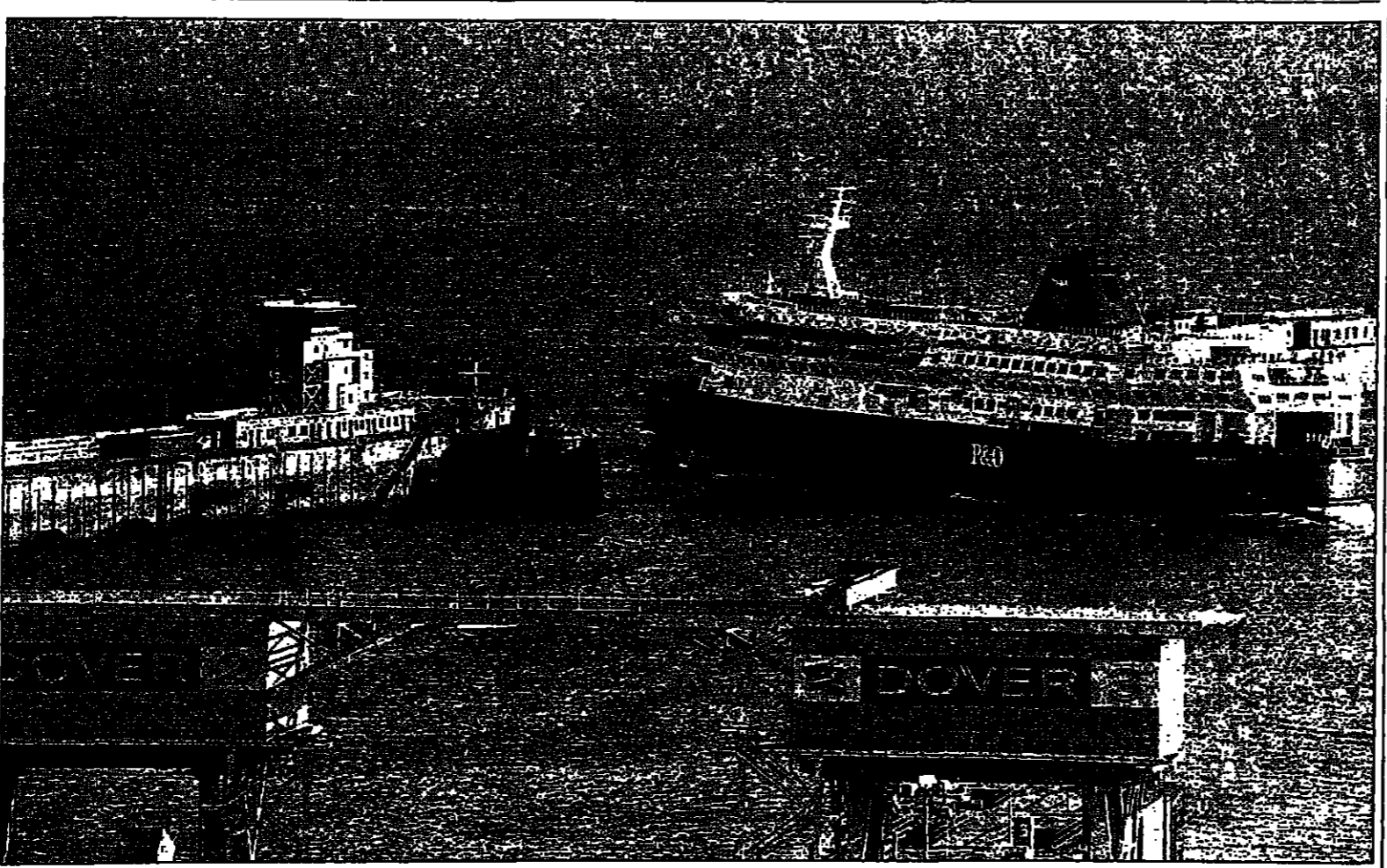
Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

'The combined operation will have assets in excess of £410 million and we will be competing with Eurotunnel with £12 billion. That is what this is about.

'It is a David and Goliath battle, if you like, but history has shown us that David can win.

'The enemy is the tunnel'

Lord Sterling



Stormy seas... smaller operators may be swamped and cheap 'booze cruises' could disappear

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARKLES

Channel ferry marriage puts minnows in deep water

Lisa Buckingham and Keith Harper
report on P&O's deal with Stena

AROUT of smaller ferry operators was predicted by analysts yesterday after the merger by P&O and Stena of their cross-Channel businesses, the market's two largest.

It was forecast that discussions taking place between P&O and Brittany Ferries to cut capacity in the western Channel would eventually lead to a full-blown merger controlled by the British shipping company.

The new P&O Stena line will have about 40 per cent of the market, a slightly smaller share than Eurotunnel, and expects to be able to reduce its yearly costs of £280 million by more than £75 million.

Although this is expected to include a reduction in capacity, the elimination of bucket fares such as £1 "booze cruises" as well as the loss of about 1,000 jobs, analysts say financial pressures on smaller operators will remain intense.

It is understood that some companies have continued in the market in the hope that P&O would fail to secure a deal with Stena, in

which case both the large operators could have looked round to mop up their smaller rivals.

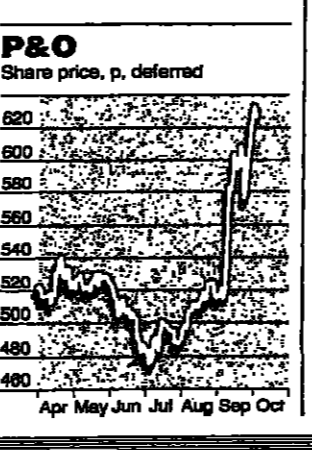
Now, analysts suggest, operators such as France's Sea France and Sea Containers, which runs hovercraft on the route, might reconsider whether to continue. This is unlikely to happen overnight.

Sea France, for instance, has its current losses underwritten by the French government and a decision to withdraw would be political, while Sally Line owns the port of Ramsgate.

Lord Sterling said he thought it unlikely that regulatory authorities would accept another partner in the P&O Stena merger, adding that pooling capacity with Brittany Ferries was "another matter". But this would offer only

limited cost savings and analysts predicted that Lord Sterling would eventually press for a full merger.

Eurotunnel, the Channel Tunnel operator whose decision to slash fares precipitated yesterday's merger,



welcomed the deal if it meant a reduction in ferry capacity.

The company, which is hammering out the final details of a £9 billion debt for equity swap with its banks, needs to be able to raise ticket prices if it is to have a hope of servicing its capital.

Only if excess capacity on the Channel disappears, and ferries start to run full, will Eurotunnel be able to charge the "premium" fare it claims its fast service demands.

Likening the merged ferry company to a David competing against the Eurotunnel Goliath, Lord Sterling said: "Once the £12 billion Eurotunnel was dumped into the ferry market it was clear that there would have to be rationalisations. This became par-

ticularly true when Eurotunnel decided not to pay interest and to buy its way into the market by slashing fares."

Shares in P&O shot up by another 18 1/2p to 643 1/2p as analysts applauded Lord Sterling's latest deal to extricate his group from its recent City doldrums.

Within the past few weeks, Lord Sterling has overhauled the property to shipping group's prospects by merging its container shipping operations with those of Holland's Nedlloyd group and acquiring total control of North Sea Ferries.

Both P&O and Stena, whose shares also rose strongly yesterday, said the new venture, which will operate 14 ships, should be "significantly cash generative".

DBS Management postpones full listing as director resigns

Richard Miles

DBS MANAGEMENT, the UK's largest firm of independent financial advisers, shelved plans yesterday for a full listing on the London Stock Exchange, after its compliance director resigned at the board's request.

The company, which is currently listed on the Alternative Investment Market, has asked

the Personal Investment Authority, the watchdog for personal finance sales, to investigate a series of allegations made by its compliance director, Kenneth Stead, against the board of the subsidiary DBS Financial Management.

In a statement issued yesterday morning, DBS said a review by its audit committee had led the board of directors to conclude that Mr Stead's "most serious allegation, regarding a compliance issue

in 1992" had not been substantiated.

In relation to other matters raised by Mr Stead, which the board of DBS does not believe to be material, certain operational procedures will be reviewed. The board has also referred these allegations to the PIA, the company added.

Since its listing on AIM last July at 145p, with a capitalisation of £10.8 million, DBS's shares have soared, peaking

at 490p a few weeks ago, increasing its market value to £36.9 million. It hoped to become the first company to graduate from AIM to a full listing, with the transfer originally scheduled for the end of last month.

Ken Davy, DBS chairman and a director of the PIA board, described the incident as "frustrating", but said the company still intended to press ahead with a full listing in due course. "This does not

countermand any of our trading statements," he said.

DBS is the managing agent for a network of 2,500 firms which specialise in providing financial advice to private investors. Its income is generated by deductions from its members' commission payments on the sale of insurance and pension policies.

Around 30 per cent of the company's stock is held by directors and its members, with Davy holding 30 per cent. Insti-

tutional investors account for a further 20 per cent and the balance rests with the public.

In 1993, DBS was fined £80,000 by the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association, a City regulator, after one of its members was found to have mislead a number of mortgage-linked income plans to elderly investors.

At close of trading yesterday, shares in DBS had been marked down 56p to 425p.

axed again

illy Sheffield

Apples prove crunch for Asda

ALLAN Leighton, the new chief executive of Asda supermarkets (pictured right at the Hampton store), maintained the populist style of his predecessor, Archie Norman, yesterday by giving away apples in protest at European Union rules.

Asda's apples campaign follows its high-profile actions against the Net Book Agreement and on vitamin and medicine prices. The company complains that EU rules forbid the sale of loose apples less than 55mm (just over two inches) in diameter. It says many English Cox apples are smaller than that but are ideal for children.

Mr Leighton said: "If we cannot sell the apples we'll happily give them away to children." Nearly 14 tonnes of small Cox apples have been delivered to Asda stores. On Saturday the first 1,000 children at each store will be given one free.

PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER



PAUL MURPHY meets a remnant of old guard with little good to say for new regimen

The word of a gentleman

It's a joke. The system's gone to ratchet. We're not better off lying to each other while looking directly into each other's eyes.

The rhetorical question comes from someone qualified to pose it — a fiftysomething male who, in his 30-odd years working in the Square Mile, has moved from the trading coiffure to senior corporate finance management. He mourns the discipline which the physical Stock Exchange dealing floor demanded, and which was swept away with Big Bang.

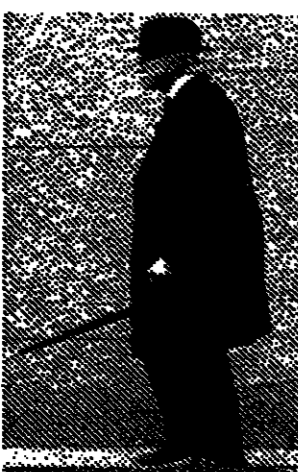
In his time (which has not yet run out, quite), the man has overseen scores of fat-fee deals which have meant life or death to dozens of stock market-listed companies, employing thousands of people. He has personally supervised the stock market flotation of maybe 50 firms. Or is it 80? He would have to sit down for a period to work it out. And yet this man would never stand up in public and criticise the London stock market.

It has been and remains his lifeblood. In the City of London, before or after Big Bang, no one speaks out of turn.

"It's a shame and it's all a shame. The public got shafted at Big Bang. Everything was supposed to be cheaper and safer for the small investor, the private investor. But it didn't happen; just the institutions benefited."

This broker/dealer-cum-City-worshiper is referring specifically to one of the key reforms which Big Bang brought to the City a decade ago: the abolition of minimum commissions.

"In truth the old system actually subsidised the individual who fancied a punt on a stock," he says. "For his 15 quid he would get the best in-



BIG BANG
10 years on

vestment advice his broker could offer. And if it wasn't really economical for the broker to talk to this particular client, it didn't matter because he would make his money up with the institutions. There was a process of redistribution going on, if you like, and it worked."

His words are backed up by statistics, which show that despite all the 1990s hyperbole of the share-owning property-owning democracy, the public is more leery of holding a stock portfolio than ever.

It brings him to his pet gripe — unnecessary costs. "I could witter on about transparency and dual capacity [where big investment banks buy and sell shares as well as advising their clients what should be bought and sold] and how any sophisticated user of the market knows the system doesn't work [fund managers distrust the system of analysts recommending

stocks, brokers selling the story and market makers renegeing the deal — all at a one-stop shop] but the bureaucracy which we have inherited on the back of Big Bang is criminal."

He counts up the regulators, the various City watchdogs and market authorities, that his firm, and he himself, are responsible to and he is close to hitting 10 fingers without drawing breath.

"The regulators want to box us in like some bit of dangerous machinery, rather than accepting that we are a creative force which helps this country — and many other countries' — and the press does not help, geeing the regulators up."

The costs come from City firms having to comply with the ever-expanding City rulebooks, the lawyers who swamp every deal, "the joke disclaimers attached to every sentence which defy grammar and defy common sense".

He says: "It is dreadful stuff. I cannot explain to you the naivety of some of the people I have had to deal with at the Stock Exchange, at the Securities and Futures Authority, and at other regulators."

"The world you and I live in is very different to the world the authorities live in. I do not mind the Quotations Department (the Stock Exchange body which supervises fully-listed deals) because you are dealing on a level, well-trod field. And the Takeover Panel are best of all. But it is any coincidence that those two bodies pre-dated Big Bang?"

"So much of what the regulators piss about with now was solved internally in the past. There was no gratuitous waste of public money. Certain behaviour was unacceptable, and that was it. Some



Exchange... not waving but closing PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN DEMPSEY

people had a seat reserved for them on the 23rd floor [of the Stock Exchange tower]. 'A word in your shell-like,' and it was sorted."

"Now they are just trying to make a federal case out of everything that happens, and yet the major scams they never get hold of them."

For this financier, the market rogues have been always been there and will never be exorcised, and he firmly believes that it is pointless trying.

"We are no better off," he insists. "Things were changing in any case. Big Bang simply crystallised it all."

Under starter's orders

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

THE financial markets look set for their biggest shake-up since the 1986 "Big Bang" after the Stock Exchange yesterday announced plans to go ahead with order-driven trading after more than nine months of consultation with brokers across the City.

The decision was taken despite City concern over the details of stamp duty tax exemption for dealings in larger trades which has yet to be finalised by the Treasury. An announcement is expected over the next two weeks.

But chief executive Gavin Casey insisted that tax uncertainties would not affect the running of the system which will usher in the electronic trading in FTSE-100 stocks, whereby deals are posted on electronic bulletin boards. This will replace the current system of trading in which market makers post prices at which they are prepared to buy or sell shares.

Mr Casey declined to put a firm date on the start-up of the system which will match the City with share trading systems in most markets around the world and make London much more competitive. The current market-making system will continue to be used for London-traded shares outside the FTSE-100 index.

Within the new system, there will be provision for dealers to carry out big "block deals" without being hampered by the immediate obligation to make the transaction public.

The move ends a turbulent period for the Exchange which earlier this year saw the resignation of chief executive Michael Lawrence.

News in brief

Financial services set to axe more jobs

MORE jobs are set to join the thousands already lost in financial services as life insurers, insurance companies and building societies struggle to stay profitable, a survey shows today.

During the past three months, employment across the financial services industry has dropped at its fastest rate since December. Only securities traders, fund managers and finance houses took on staff during the third quarter of 1996, and employment generally is expected to fall more slowly during the next three months.

The survey, by the CBI and accountants Coopers & Lybrand, shows that optimism among financial services firms rose sharply for the third quarter running. However, the recessionary effects continue to linger, with business — although increasing — still below normal.

Sudhir Jumanakar, of the CBI, said: "This recovery seems to be from a low base... but the bounce-back in profits is becoming firmly established as firms continue to control costs by cutting jobs." — Dan Atkinson

BT pre-empts OfTel action

OFTEL yesterday withdrew the threat of formal action against British Telecom after the group modified proposed prices for ISDN2, its high speed digital service for residential customers and small businesses. OfTel's director general, Don Cruickshank, said the new prices removed anti-competitive elements and included worthwhile price cuts. — Nicholas Barnister

3,000 jobs at Bolton's leisure

MORE than 3,000 jobs could be created at a £150 million leisure and sports complex in Bolton, Lancashire. The Middlebrook Development at Horwich will include a 25,000-seat stadium for Bolton Wanderers FC, a sports village complex and retail and leisure parks. — Maryn Halsall

Sony turns to veteran

VETERAN Hollywood executive Jim Calley yesterday emerged as the great white hope for Sony's troubled film studio, which is trying to replace Alan Levine who resigned its president. The Japanese conglomerate is negotiating with Mr Calley, president of MGM's United Artists unit, for a "senior position".

Should he take Mr Levine's job, Mr Calley has to restore morale at a studio buffeted by an exodus of executives and box office flops, such as The Cable Guy, for which Jim Carrey received \$20 million (£13.3 million). — Mark Tran in New York

Clarke frets away at the 'group hug'

Richard Thomas in Washington is worried about the Chancellor

ONE finance minister attending the endless round of meetings of the G7, G10, World Bank and IMF this week barked at his officials: "Why can't I have speaking notes as good as those Kenneth Clarke gets?"

When the chastised advisers turned up at the British delegation's offices for some hints, a mandarin explained: "We'd be happy to help, but the thing is he never reads his speaking notes."

This is quintessential Clarke — a broad-brush operator who learns what he needs to get his way, and nothing more. Ask about IMF structural adjustment programmes and his eyes begin to glaze over.

But the Chancellor loves cajoling others to his point of view and has become a minor hero of the non-governmental organisations after pushing through the third-world debt plan.

Unfortunately, helping the world's poor does not win brownie points with his Tory backbench enemies. Mr Clarke has been forced to give dead-of-night interviews about tax and monetary union to the BBC's Today pro-

gramme, ruining his plans to bear the Charlie Byrd trio at his favourite Washington jazz club, Blues Alley.

Still, there has been a different kind of therapy for Mr Clarke. Holding a nation's purse strings is a lonely task. Spending ministers hate you for refusing to fund their pet scheme; everyone else hates you for not cutting taxes more. So when the West's finance ministers get together, it is in part a mutual affirmation session, a group hug for fiscal consolidators.

But even as he enjoys a few drinks on the embassy terrace, there are a couple of warning signs from the Chancellor that all is not well.

FIRST, it is an old truth that when politicians start to see their international work as more important than domestic politics, the game will soon be up. Mr Clarke is not there yet, but he already sees a contrast between the potential for effecting change on a global scale and the pettiness of British politics.

Even more disturbing is the Chancellor's constant fretting about his treatment by right-wing commentators, who think his pro-European credentials and refusal to dole out tax cuts will ensure victory for Tony Blair. When a thick-skinned Tory Chancellor complains so loudly and often about the Tory press, there is clearly trouble ahead.

Virgin seeks to build air network in Africa

Financial staff

RICHARD Branson wants to forge a low-cost pan-African air network to link with his new Virgin airline route to South Africa.

Speaking after the inaugural flight of Virgin Atlantic's service between London and Johannesburg, he said he now wanted to buy Sun Air, the South African state-owned airline, and saw it as the base for a continent-wide network on the model of his new Virgin Express short-haul airline in Europe.

Mr Branson said he was interested in Sun Air if the South African government's plans to privatise the airline went ahead in March. "It depends what the price is but yes, we would like to look at buying Sun Air," he told a news conference. "We get on well with the people who run it... and I think it can be developed as a force in Africa."

Last month Virgin announced a new code-sharing pact with Sun Air, which currently flies between Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town using a fleet of two Boeing 727s and five McDonnell Douglas DC8s.

A spokesman said that Virgin would be speaking to South Africa's Transport Minister, Mac Maharaj, in more detail about the plan. Virgin believes Sun Air currently makes a profit of about \$4 million a year.

Littlewoods 'not to float'

Roger Cowe

JAMES Ross, the new chairman of the Littlewoods retail and betting group, yesterday dismissed speculation that the family-owned business was heading for the stock market.

Announcing substantially increased profits in their British market, the group broke new ground by publishing half-year results for the first time, Mr Ross said: "We are trying to market the company to all our stakeholders, not just shareholders. This is not in preparation for becoming a quoted company. Flotation is not on the agenda — indefinitely."

Last year the dispersed Moores family shareholders rejected bid approaches and set up a new shareholder council. Mr Ross replaced Leonard van Geest.

Just four months into the job, Mr Ross claimed Littlewoods had enormous potential which had not been realised in the recent past.

"It has underperformed for the best part of a decade," he said. "But the group has some strong brand names and we are taking radical action to improve performance."

He warned that some of the

group's businesses might be sold or merged as the result of a strategic review.

Yesterday's figures showed some improvement in retail sales and a recovery in profits at the pools operation despite turnover continuing to be hit by the National Lottery. Mr Ross said the new Index Extra home shopping operation had been extremely successful.

"The result was higher operating profits for the half-year to June, up from £5 million to £14 million, but an additional exceptional profit last year meant the pretax result was £4 million down at £12.5 million.

Clothing retailers counter sweatshop claims

Roger Cowe

TWO prominent clothing retailers yesterday hit back at claims of sweatshop conditions in their British factories by detailing checks they make to ensure fair practice.

C&A said it had called its inspectors in to two suppliers in Birmingham, and had warned them about safety risks such as locked fire doors and overcrowded factories.

It rejected claims that some workers were paid less than £2 an hour.

Marks & Spencer, Britain's biggest clothing chain, said it was "confident but not complacent" that its suppliers met high

standards. But the company is reviewing the code of conduct suppliers are required to sign.

Peter Booth, national textiles officer for the Transport and General Workers' Union, said it was a mistake to focus solely on developing countries when dealing with sweatshop conditions.

"We have always said it is a worldwide problem, and that applies even to child labour. The need for codes of conduct, with independent monitoring, is as great in the UK as it is in the Philippines or Sri Lanka," he said.

Retailers have come under increasing pressure from campaigners such as Oxfam and Christian Aid to

take responsibility for working conditions in Third World factories.

A C&A spokesman said the company had set up a new code of conduct in May and had established an auditing operation.

"We want to improve conditions in factories wherever we do business, sub-contractors as well as our main suppliers, and for everybody in the factory, not just those working on C&A products," he said.

He called on government agencies to help enforcement, saying: "We can't be the judge, jury and police. We need local authorities and the health and safety inspectorate to ensure that conditions are satisfactory."

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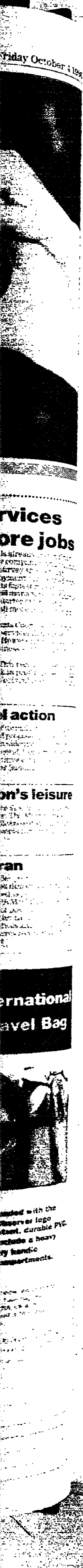
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Market with guide...

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Racing

Bounty pays out on £1m outlay

FRANKIE DETTORI, so often the hero, was nearly the villain in yesterday's Middle Park Stakes at Newmarket...

Maktoum Al Maktoum, who purchased the colt from the previous owners, the Lucayan Stud, a couple of days ago for \$1 million...

morning work-out. "He was much brighter than at the weekend and will run in the Arc provided there is no adverse reaction to his work..."

"He's not running on soft ground, but we wouldn't be worried by rain to soft. At least that would bring his stamina into play and might stop some of the others..."



Park drive... Frankie Dettori powers home on Bahamian Bounty in the Middle Park Stakes

Grape looks form pick

GRAPESHOT, one of 21 two-year-olds left in next month's Dewhurst Stakes at the latest forfeit stage, can book his ticket for the major juvenile test with victory in today's Somerville Tattersall Stakes at Newmarket...

Dettoni to ride in Hong Kong

FRANKIE DETTORI has been offered a contract to ride in Hong Kong this winter. Four years ago his application to ride there was turned down soon after he received a police caution for possession of cocaine...

the denial of his 1992 application. "They never gave a reason why they turned me down. They didn't have to," he said.

Newmarket with guide to recent form

Table of racing results for Newmarket, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Lingfield runners and riders

Table of racing results for Lingfield, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Hexham (N.H.)

Table of racing results for Hexham (N.H.), including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Results

Table of racing results, including race numbers, names, and winners.

NEWMARKET

Table of racing results for Newmarket, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

MARKET RASEN

Table of racing results for Market Rasen, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Channel 4

Table of racing results for Channel 4, including race numbers, names, and winners.

Large advertisement for 'RACELINE' featuring a grid of numbers and promotional text.

Rugby Union

Twickenham and clubs inch towards peace formula

Robert Armstrong

THREE threatened break-aways by England's leading clubs from the Rugby Football Union, due to take place next Friday, will be quietly shelved as the result of an outline peace formula which the two sides will flesh out in greater detail within the next fortnight.

After months of stalling by the RFU and aggressive posturing by the clubs, their negotiators have mapped out sufficient common ground on the distribution of money to the clubs to avert a major split in the English game.

A Twickenham statement yesterday said: "The RFU has made contact with English Professional Rugby Union Clubs in order to start negotiations to settle the dispute."

Last night an EPRU statement said: "The clubs are pleased that, for the first time, the RFU has publicly recognised the need for it to change and adapt in order to accommodate the needs of the modern professional game."

In contrast, the Welsh Rugby Union has braced itself for a fresh outbreak of hostilities at a meeting with top Welsh clubs in Cardiff tonight. The umbrella company for the clubs, Welsh First Division Rugby Limited, has received from WRU an offer for television rights to the Heineken European Cup in Wales; it is worth £2 million over four years. If the WRU fails to approve that offer or suggest a better alternative, the clubs are threatening to go their own way.

Fears that several English clubs would not be able to honour players' contracts and sustain the professional game beyond the current season have been dramatically reduced by the prospect of guaranteed income from Twickenham and television combined.

Two separate offers for British TV rights to the European Cup, one from Sky worth £18 million over four years and another from a consortium of terrestrial and cable TV companies, are in the pipeline. They will save some clubs with huge wage bills from the looming threat of bankruptcy.

Roger Pickering, the Heineken European Cup director, also confirmed that the tournament's board of management had received a firm offer to televise the competition, which will have 47 matches and will begin tomorrow week. Last week ITV withdrew from plans to broadcast the seven-nation event; it had completed a year of a £15 million three-year agreement before exercising its option to pull out.

Sources close to EPRU admitted that the pressure on clubs to generate at least £1 million each in fresh revenue this season had been eased by the imminence of a TV deal on the European Cup.

The practical problems involved in a mass breakaway convinced many Cotswold league clubs that they stood to lose out at home and abroad because of the refusal of unions in other countries to deal with administrative bodies other than the RFU and the International Board.

Also, it is understood that Twickenham has made a significant increase on the £5 million earmarked for the clubs which was publicly acknowledged by the RFU treasurer Colin Herridge last month. League One clubs can expect to receive £200,000 to £300,000 each this season in return for specific undertakings on the release of players for England squad sessions and international matches; that is close to double Twickenham's original offer.

If the RFU also honours a ground-breaking proposal made by its secretary Tony Hallett in a letter to the EPRU chairman Donald Kerr three weeks ago, then the clubs will also retain all European Cup revenue from TV, sponsorship and promotional sources from next season onwards.

Depending on the outcome of negotiations with TV, the English clubs could look forward to annual revenues of between £7 million and £10 million to be divided among participants in the competition.

Meanwhile, the England manager Jack Rowell has added the 22-year-old prospect Will Green of Wasps and Matt Volland of Northampton to his original squad of 45 for next Wednesday's training session at Bisham Abbey. At last week's session there were only five props, two of whom could not train because of injury, thus ruling out Volland.

The Leicester pair Dean Richards (48 caps) and Rory Underwood (85 caps), and Bath's Victor Uboha, Jon Callard, Graham Dawe and Andy Robinson, remain in the cold.

Gibbs the crash-ball is back as Mr Soft Hands

David Plummer on the Welsh centre who went North as a barnstormer but will return tomorrow against Italy as a class act

SCOTT GIBBS made a try-scoring return to rugby union last month, easing his way through Swansea's victory with such poise and assurance that it did not seem possible he had been away from the game for nearly three years.

As well as scoring a try, Gibbs, who at 15ft 6in was considerably bulkier than when he left Wales in the spring of 1994, was his side's attacking fulcrum and saved two tries with last-ditch tackles. The reaction of the 26-year-old after the match was so downbeat it was almost as if he wished he had not made the return from St Helens.

"I was bored," he said after emerging from the changing rooms. "There were long periods when I had nothing to do and, having come from an all-action game, it was hard to accept. I wanted to be doing something all the time."

But, after being named in the Wales squad for tomorrow's international in Rome, Gibbs said he had been wrong in his choice of verb. "I should not have said 'bored', it is a question of adjusting to union, just as when I joined St Helens I had to get accustomed to the great pace of league."

"It is just that I knew it was not a case of everything being right. People were saying it was as if I had never been away, but it felt strange and still does. The two games are completely different and I hope they never merge. They should be able to co-exist because they do not offer spectators the same thing."

Gibbs is as direct of the field as he is on it. When he was chosen in the Wales squad last month he declared that he wanted to be considered only as an inside centre.

"That was where I was playing for Swansea before I went North. Wales were mess-

ing me about by playing me outside centre and left and right, but I had found my true place with the Lions in New Zealand in 1993 and that was as an inside centre.

"That is the only position I want to play now. If I am not good enough for Swansea or for Wales there, so be it, but I have no intention of being moved around."

It was the Lions coach Ian McGeechan who turned Gibbs into an inside centre, moulding the strong-running back who had been employed as a crash-ball centre by Wales into a player of vision who used his strength to benefit others by offloading at the point of contact.

Whereas Wales had seemed to write off Gibbs as a brainless barnstormer, McGeechan trusted the player's natural instincts. The outcome was the softest of hands, which amazed the Welsh rugby public and cost Will Carling his place in the Test side.

Though Gibbs has not been leaping in the air begging to be picked by Wales, he will play against Italy tomorrow as a result of an injury to the incumbent inside centre, Nigel.

"My aim is to become a permanent fixture for Wales, and there is a huge incentive next summer because the Lions are touring South Africa and Ian McGeechan is again the coach.

"I learned a tremendous amount from him that summer and he made me a much better player. To tour with the Lions is still the pinnacle of a rugby player's career and I will be going all out for a place in the squad."

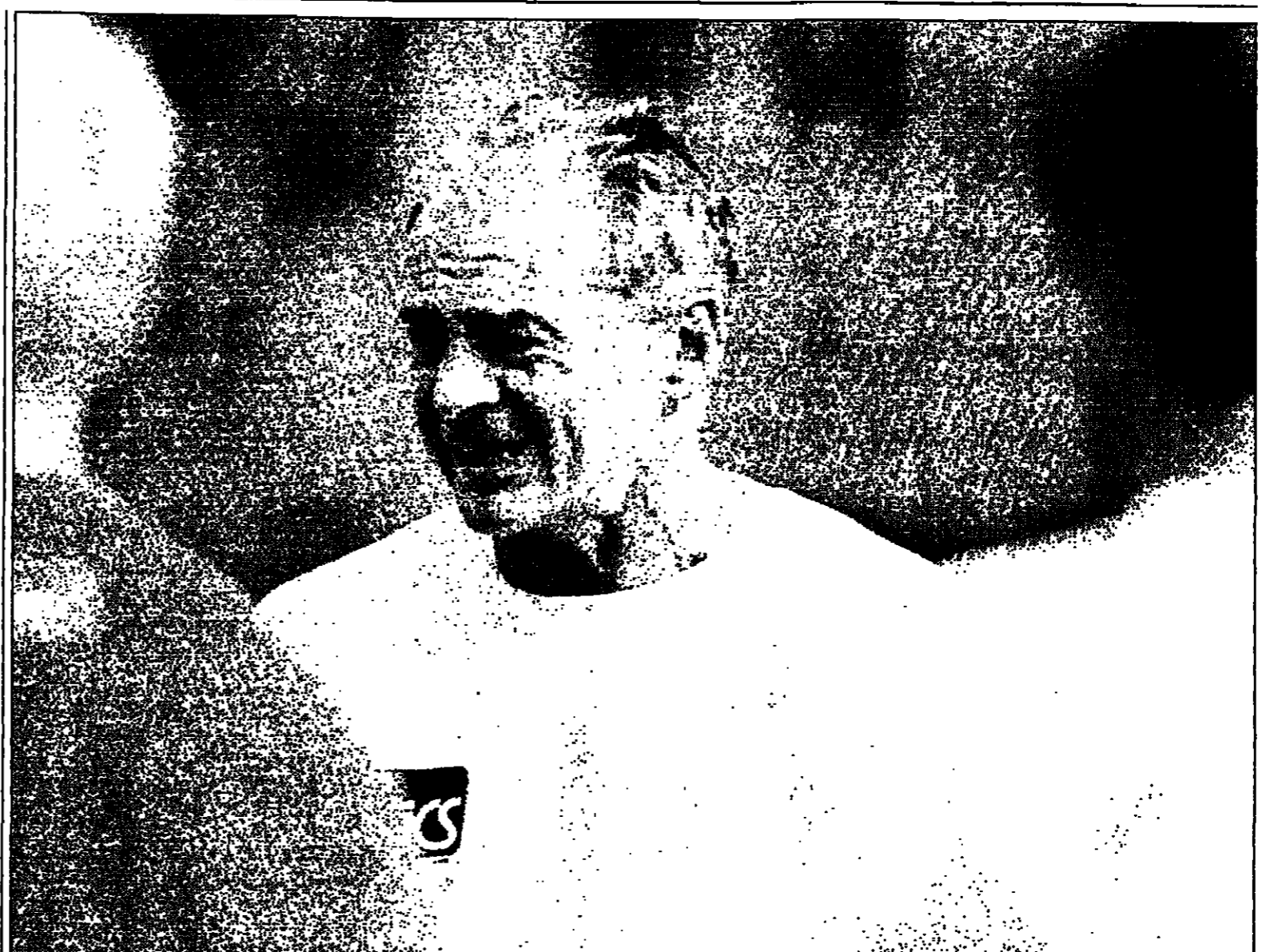
Gibbs's last appearance in union was for McGeechan's Barbarians against New Zealand in December 1993. He damaged knee ligaments and before that season ended he had signed for St Helens even though he was three months away from playing.

"I felt frustrated at certain things and St Helens made me a very good offer. I enjoyed my time in league but union is my first love and when I had the opportunity to return to Swansea I took it."

Gibbs left a Wales side in transition, though they went on to win the Five Nations in 1994, and has returned to find the builders still there. With forwards such as David Young, Scott Quinnell and Richard Webster back in harness, Wales are expected to have more backbone than in recent years but Gibbs advises caution.

"A few players returning are not going to make much difference on their own. Wales will only get better if the collective attitude right and that means embracing professionalism properly. What is heartening is that there is a genuine competition for places in most positions now, which was not the case when I left."

Hosting the 1999 World Cup offers Wales a marvellous opportunity. We have three years to make sure that we take it with both hands."



Talking it through... the coach Phil Larder gets serious while taking training for tomorrow's Test

PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA MATTHEWS

Lions must fight their own battle

Andy Wilson reports from Nadi on Great Britain's selections for a slightly overshadowed first ever Test in Fiji

IT IS typical of a disastrous year for international rugby league that the build-up to Great Britain's first ever Test in Fiji tomorrow should be overshadowed by events in a Sydney courtroom.

While the Lions and their preparations for what promises to be a fascinating game, the British assistant coach Gary Hetherington appeared on Fiji television and insisted that even if Super League's comprehensive legal defeat by the court, there would be no threat to this Test.

"I think the Australian Rugby League is just being mischievous," he said in response to suggestions that the game might be postponed.

The Fijian Rugby League, like the professional game in Britain, is firmly aligned with Super League, having been contracted along with other Pacific nations at the International Rugby League Board meeting in London in April 1995, deals which left the ARL almost completely isolated.

The ARL did manage to come up with some Fijian opposition to face the Kangaroos a few months ago, but it was a mismatch and Australia duly ran up more than 80 points.

Great Britain's opponents tomorrow will be a very different proposition, even though Fiji have lost their captain Noa Nadruku, a prolific winger with Canberra Raiders, who withdrew last night for unspecified personal

reasons. Manoa Thompson, formerly of South Sydney and, briefly, Warrington, will take over the captaincy. Most of his team-mates, moreover, have first-grade experience either in Australia, for example the loose forward Lee Nalagilagi, or in England.

Nalagilagi was the captain when Fiji lost 46-0 to England in a World Cup match at Wigan 12 months ago, but the scoreline was a misleading reflection of a tough, competitive game, as the seven survivors of it have stressed in the preparations for this Test.

The odds then were stacked against the Fijians, with a 26,263 crowd welcoming Phil Larder's side back to the north after the victory over Australia at Wembley four days earlier. Tomorrow Great

Britain will have to kick off at Prince Charles' Park under a fierce afternoon sun; and the Fijians will be an immeasurably stronger side for an extra year's experience.

Four of them played in Super League in England last season, Joe Tamani on the wing for Bradford Bulls, and three others for Sheffield Eagles: Walsale Sovatabua will start at full-back, Joe Dakuitoga in the second row, and Mala Yasa at prop in direct opposition to his Sheffield captain Paul Broadbent, who gains his second Great Britain cap after a solid performance in Papua New Guinea on Saturday.

Keith Senior will be the fifth Sheffield player involved, a surprising choice on the bench for the Lions but deservedly there after two impressive try-scoring games on tour so far. Senior, a 20-year-old from Huddersfield, gets his chance because Daryl

Powell, a former Sheffield player, has been promoted from the bench to left centre, effectively in place of Joey Hayes. Alan Hunte switches to the right wing after passing a fitness test on a back injury.

Two other changes have been made to the starting line-up that defeated PNG, Bradford's Brian McDermott making his Test debut in the front row in place of Wigan's Terry O'Connor, and Warrington's teenaged Paul Scullthorpe taking over from Chris Joynt in the second row. Steve Molloy of Featherstone and Mick Cassidy of Wigan join Senior and Castleford's Tony Smith on the substitutes' bench.

GREAT BRITAIN: Scrummager (Bradford): Powell (Sheffield), Fullback (Wigan): Hayes (Bradford), Left wing (Sheffield): Scullthorpe (Wigan), Centre (Sheffield): O'Connor (Wigan), Right wing (Sheffield): Molloy (Featherstone), Prop (Wigan): Senior (Sheffield), Prop (Sheffield): Cassidy (Wigan).

Sport in brief

Squash

The world champion Jansher Khan, who was banned from the Super League for the whole of last season, has agreed to return to play for Surbiton, writes Richard Jago. The Pakistani will be returning to action in Britain in January after an interval of 20 months.

Jansher, who was punished for not trying while playing against the Fijians, even in the semi-finals of the Super League, will now line up in a squad containing the England Internationals Simon Parke and Tony Hands and a top-20 Frenchman, Julien Bonstet.

Tennis

Mark Miles, the chief executive of the ATP Tour, has warned players that they face instant ejection from tournaments for abusive on-court behaviour. In an open letter Miles said: "We will tolerate a player's verbal or physical abuse of an official, fellow player, member of the media or spectator."

In August Andre Agassi was kicked out of the RCA Championships in Atlanta after a verbal tirade against Daniel Nestor. He cursed officials and slammed a ball into the stands.

Hockey

Wales crashed to their second defeat in four games at the World Cup preliminary tournament in Sardinia yesterday. Simon Organ and Mark Smith scored their goals in their 3-2 defeat by China in Pool A. Wales face Canada tomorrow.

Chess

England's fourth board, the 22-year-old Matthew Sadler from Chatham, has won an individual gold medal at the Erevan Olympiad, Leonard Barden. He follows the previous English winners John Nunn (1984) and Nigel Short (1986).

Sadler's 61 per cent score was the second-best of the Olympiad, ahead of Garry Kasparov's 78 per cent on top board for Russia. Susan Lalic of Sutton took the top-board women's bronze.

Cricket

Australia's fast bowler Craig McDermott will miss the first three of five home Tests against West Indies in November and December because of a knee injury. He will undergo surgery next week to repair tendon damage.

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Equestrianism

Philippaerts leads off for Belgian raiders

John Kerr at Wembley

UDO PHILIPPAERTS on Trudo Jannique won the first international event of the Horse of the Year Show yesterday, the Welcome Stakes, in which Belgians filled four of the top six places.

Some in the 40-strong field treated this one-round class as a warm-up for the tests ahead, but the Belgians had other ideas and Francois Mathey set a strong pace on Ivor in the first of 14 clears.

Near the end Nick Skelton and Sublime were marginally faster and looked the winners

until edged out by Philippaerts, who recently won his fourth Belgian championship. David McPherson, the Kent-based South African, won a four-horse jump-off for the Grade B Championship with the only clear on Lapino.

Louise Whitaker, the talented 16-year-old daughter of John, improved on her fourth place of last year to win the Under-21 Championship on Cowboy Magic Deep Heat and goes for the double in today's Under-18 event.

Late on Wednesday the Women's National Championship went to Kelly Brown on Gulliver with the Easter of two faultless rounds in a three-horse barrage.

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SportsGuardian

UNITED'S MANAGER TAKES THE STAND AT BLACKPOOL TO CONDEMN THE FA



One goal, lots of balls... Tony Blair and Alex Ferguson under fire at Blackpool yesterday where the United manager had some harsh words for the FA PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARLES

Old Ferguson, new moan

John Duncan hears a party conference outburst over the Premiership fixture list

ALEX FERGUSON launched an attack on the Football Association for failing to prevent United and Liverpool meeting in a Premiership match on Saturday week, days before both sides are in European action. "There is something crazy about that," said Ferguson, speaking at a Labour Party

Conference fringe meeting. "I don't know who organised it but the FA needs to look at it." He is furious that while Continental teams are given resting time and easy games before UEFA competitions, the programme in England carries on regardless. "You need rest to prepare and to organise. How can I organise a team to the maximum if I am playing Liverpool on the Saturday before a European game? That rest

factor, that mental strength you get by relaxing; the Italians have been doing it for years. I don't say we should choose who we play on the Saturday before, but someone should prevent us playing each other at least. "Ask yourself what has happened in the last 10 years since Heydel. Which country has become the most powerful European nation? The two best club sides in Europe are Italian: Milan and Juventus.

Party tricks with the world game



Vincent Hanna

MY TAXI driver in Blackpool was a comedian, but they all are. After a warm-up joke about ethnic minorities he said: "Tell me three clubs with swear words in their titles." He scarcely drew breath: "Arsenal, Scunthorpe... and Manchester United." I laughed, deducted 5p from his tip and kicked his ball-light in. I tried this joke at the Labour Party Conference and found that it sorts out the sheep from the goats. (Actually I'm not sure I'm allowed to say that. Under New Labour goats are treated as sheep who come from broken homes. There are many football enthusiasts in Blackpool, some slightly demented (Alistair Campbell supports Burnley), but the party has not worked out whether it is good policy to celebrate it in public.

castle United fanatic, still in therapy from the Charity Shield, and Pendry is respected in football circles. He is also popular in the party, not least because he can get tickets to almost anything. I have poked fun at him in the past, mixing his name up with Iain Sprouat, the Sports Minister. But his rehabilitation began yesterday when he brought Alex Ferguson to the Labour Party Conference. From his youth Ferguson has been a committed Labour supporter. He once led a strike of AEU apprentices at Remington Rand's factory on Clydeside, and not for pecuniary gain either. "We met in the gents' toilet. 11 of us. Apprentices from all over the country were coming out and we had to support them." This secondary action was passed on his casting vote. It would be illegal to do that under present law. Come to think of it, he needed a two-thirds majority then as well.

In July he asked Eric Cantona to donate his Cup final shirt to a party fund-raiser in the Savoy. It sold for £17,500, paid by Brian Davies who donated it (and also one from Ryan Giggs) to the International Fund for Animal Welfare, which put them in a safe in East Sussex where they remain.

Enter Steve Morgan, another Labour businessman. Yesterday he persuaded IFAW to raffle the shirts for fans in the North-west. The man who will most benefit is Phil Woolas, the candidate for Oldham East and Saddleworth, where part of the proceeds will go. Woolas is definitely a member of the laddish fraternity, and I said so. "Actually I'm a new lad," he replied, "and to coin an interesting phrase: the shirt is coming home."

AT THE fringe meeting Ferguson kept to football. He made a plea to reduce the number of matches and told how Cantona had re-taught the team the virtues of practice. "You cannot learn football by playing matches," he said. "Maybe we had forgotten that." I wondered if he had any coaching tips for New Labour and Tony Blair. "I'm looking for tips from him," he said fraternally. After the fringe meeting I got the train to Manchester. The taxi-driver told me he would be voting Conservative. "Look at all this," he said, airily waving at a forest of small hotels, boarding houses and hamburger joints. "Labour will give all this away to Europe. It sounded good to me.

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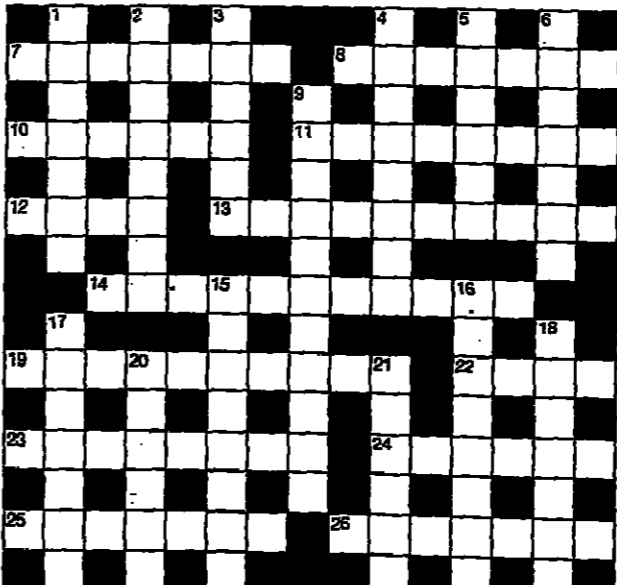


When Laura J Hird had her first story accepted by Rebel Inc, she received two pages of comments from Kevin Williamson; when a friend's story was turned down, she received four pages of detailed criticism instead of a rejection slip. The Malcolm McLaren of literary Edinburgh

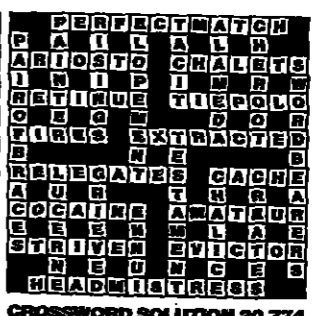
FridayReview page 4

Guardian Crossword No 20,775

Set by Rufus



- Across**
- 7 Injured fliers returned to base (7)
 - 8 The crown takes a firm course, if backed (7)
 - 10 Bill comes back with a new coil of fabric (6)
 - 11 How to win a ballet competition? (2,6)
 - 12 Written authority for many to strike (4)
 - 13 Currently the chief form of jazz? (10)
 - 14 Newly leased building for sheep (11)
 - 19 I've acted on new indication of a deal (6,4)
 - 22 Turn on a fool (4)
 - 23 Sad passage to quote in turn (8)
 - 24 Run off at outset of disturbance (6)
- Down**
- 1 Stick to the point as a junior diplomat (7)
 - 2 A drink — Ben has it as a cocktail (6)
 - 3 Show improvement with respect to criminal record (6)
 - 4 Calm artfully created (6)
 - 5 He is or could be a shopkeeper (6)
 - 6 Not involved in fight, so not changed (7)
 - 9 A copper collection? (6,5)
 - 15 Covered outhouse full of warmth (8)
 - 16 Injury received in turning over? (3-5)
 - 17 Go for the money first (7)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,774

- 18 It may wilt and droop in the centre (7)
- 20 One way to get inspiration (6)
- 21 Avoided potential duel with editor (6)

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Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'The Rome and Juliet Mafia wed', 'Document s', 'A pe', 'The real is is justice', and 'Inside'.